CALIFORNIA AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK (CAN)

QUALITY COMMITTEE

Recommendations for Implementation of Quality Standards and Cycle of Quality Improvement

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WORKGROUP 3
VERSION 9.10.15

■ OVERVIEW

In 2014, the California Department of Education (CDE) adopted quality standards as a guide for expanded learning programs across the state. In 2015, the Governor signed SB1221 into law (now codified as EC 8484 (a) (2)), which requires all CDE expanded learning grantees to show evidence that they are engaged in a quality improvement process towards the California quality standards. To be well-implemented, these two initiatives will require a significant amount of attention and time from stakeholders across the expanded learning field, including the CDE's After School Division (ASD staff), k-12 districts, expanded learning providers, and technical assistance (TA) providers. This paper describes specific recommendations about what information, tools, and TA the field will need in order to be successful, who should develop those supports, and in what timeframe.

Purpose of Work Group 3

Work Group 3 of the California Afterschool Network's (CAN's) Quality Committee was convened for two meetings to develop these recommendations. Work Group 3 follows Work Group 1, which developed the quality standards, and Work Group 2, which developed Standards in Action to provide descriptions for each of the standards.

In round 3, the role of the Work Group was to provide recommendations - to the ASD staff and the field more broadly - about what kinds of information, tools and TA are needed for effective implementation of the quality standards and the cycle of quality improvement (CQI). The Work Group is intended to advise and support the ASD staff and its System of Support Work Group, which is focused specifically on the ASD staff's resources and supports. The recommendations from Work Group 3 are intended to be broader, encompassing work that needs to happen and will be driven by program providers, TA providers, and other stakeholders across the state.

Recommendations

As the Work Group discussed possible recommendations – in context of existing assets and resources in the expanded learning field– several key principles were repeatedly woven into the conversation. It seems important to highlight these themes as overarching to the more detailed recommendations below:

- The intention of the quality standards and EC 8484 (a) (2) is to spark improvement, innovation, and forward momentum so that children receive the best possible services across the field. It is not about compliance, or meeting minimum requirements.

- Quality improvement is about the process, not the tool.

- Expectations need to be realistic to the resources of the field, including both programs and TA providers.

- The system of support will need to continuously assess, plan, and improve along with programs.

- The field and the ASD staff should maximize their resources and expertise by collaborating and coordinating their efforts to support quality.

- This is a long-game. Practices will not change quickly so all expanded learning stakeholders will need to be patient and will need to be ready to revise and adapt to respond to new conditions, resources and research.

The recommendations – starting on the next page – are divided into three sections for short-term (in the next year), mid-term (in the next 2-3 years) and long-term (in the next 3 to 5 years). The intention is to outline the supports that are needed over time as the field gains familiarity, skills and experience in the quality standards and CQI.

Each section of the recommendations is further divided between types of support needed, including:

- **Information** – descriptions of requirements, expectations, processes and resources that are essential to programs' ability to implement the quality standards and the CQI.

- **Tools** – devices or instruments used to support implementation.

- **Technical Assistance (TA)** – ongoing, needs-driven support services – including training, coaching, mentoring, consulting and brokering resources – to support implementation.

Each entry also states what audience the support should be most immediately targeted to reach, and who should take the lead role in the process of developing the support - CDE, the field or CDE and the field together. Where an item is listed as CDE-led or field-led, it is assumed that input may be requested from the other entity to gather perspectives, leverage expertise, and honor the spirit of collaboration and coordination.

Next Steps

This report has been delivered to the ASD staff, and shared through the CAN newsletter and website. Per the recommendations, a convening of TA providers – representing the state system of support as well as independent intermediary organizations and individual consultants – would be a powerful way to disseminate these recommendations and consider next steps in their implementation across the field. Ideally, implementation of the short-term recommendations will begin immediately.

The Work Group hopes that stakeholders will use these recommendations in the spirit in which they were intended – to strengthen supports and opportunities for young people across California who deserve to realize their full potential as empowered, productive, and positive members of society.

RECOMMENDATIONS ■

SHORT TERM (in the next year) In the short term, the Work Group recommends a focus on awareness building about the quality standards and the CQI and skill building about the steps that need to be taken to understand and make improvements towards the quality standards. Grantees need to understand what the requirements and expectations are, what they need to do, and how they can build the basic skills to meet those requirements.

Type of Support	Audience*	Lead Group
INFORMATION		

Needs assessment – step 1 of 2
    - Identify the type of data that should be collected from all grantees in order to decide what information, tools, TA are needed
    - Should consider how existing data can be helpful
	TA providers
	Regional Triads
	ASD staff
	Program managers
	Grant managers
		CDE-led

Detailed EC 8484 (a) (2) policy implementation guidelines for quality standards and CQI, including clear language on:
    - Reporting and monitoring requirements
    - Intention around quality
    - Best practices for assessment and implementation
    - Focus on process, not tool
    - Low stakes accountability
    - Timeline
Distribute through multiple media – ie: memos, email, presentations, webinars
	Program managers
	Grant managers
	Community partners
	TA providers
	Regional Triads
		CDE-led

Brief EC 8484 (a) (2) information
    - Including intention, focus on process, low stakes accountability
    - Distribute through multiple channels across the field – email, text w. link to website, facebook
    - Using line staff-friendly language and design
	Program managers
	Site coordinators
	Line staff
		Co-led

Crosswalk between quality standards, core competencies and certified assurances - Emphasize consistency and relationship between different elements	Grant managers Program managers TA providers Regional Triads ASD staff staff	Co-led

Comprehensive communications plan ★
    - Create on-going channels for information to be distributed from ASD staff all the way through ELT system to line staff
    - Develop with support from social media expert
	All	Co-led

Shared understanding of quality standards and CQI, including:
    - Elevator speech on quality – everyone on staff knows what quality is, why it's important and what's being done to improve it
    - Understanding of the CQI cycles and timeline
    - Understanding of the value of data
    - Defined roles and responsibilities
	Program managers
	Community partners
	Site coordinators
	Line staff
		Co-led

★ = one time investment

TOOLS		
CQI start-up tip sheet – very brief description of recommended first steps, including: ★ - Setting up a timeline - Building staff awareness and buy-in - Collecting and using data - Identifying improvement goals and strategies - Outlining suggested roles and responsibilities of grantee, community partners, and different staff levels - Defining roles & responsibilities - Accessing TA Ideally different versions for different staff levels	TA providers Regional Triads Grant managers Program managers Site coordinators Community partners	Co-led
Quality improvement plan template, documenting: ★ - Improvement goals - Strategies to reach those goals - Roles & responsibilities - TA needed - Timeline - Sample improvement plans	Grant managers Community partners Site coordinators	Co-led
CQI guidebook, including: ★ - CQI process and quality standards - Best practices - Guidelines and key questions for negotiating sustainable and equitable roles and responsibilities between grantees and community partners - Suggested roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders including regional leads, grant managers, program managers, and site coordinators - How TA strategies support CQI - References back to Crosswalk for tool selection	TA providers Regional Triads Grant managers Program managers Site coordinators Community partners	Field-led
Menu of standardized, replicable workshops on CQI process and each quality standard - Includes agenda, PPT, materials on-line for field to use in multiple venues - System for providing input to workshops as people use and revise them	TA providers Regional Triads Grant managers Program managers Site coordinators Community partners	Field-led
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		
TA provider convening in order to: - Digest these recommendations and implications for their work in the field - Identify what different stakeholders are doing, and communications channels for future work - The goal is that TA providers work independently, but with cohesion and communication so that the field has greater understanding of how/where to access support	TA providers Regional Triads or Triads	Co-Led
Identification of TA service gaps – step 1 of 2 ★ - Use CDE-commissioned TA Landscape to identify geographic and content areas that are not fully covered - Raise funds to develop and implement plan to increase services in those areas - Develop plan	TA providers Regional Triads	Co-Led

Multiple types of TA on quality standards/CQI across the state
    - Training on quality standards/CQI, with intentionality around role of regional leads, grant managers, program managers, and site coordinators as trainers
    - Consultation with, and facilitation of, individual grantees and community partners in the planning process, and in establishing sustainable roles and responsibilities for assessment and implementation
    - Coaching on improvement plan implementation
    - Mentoring between sites and grantees
	TA providers
	Regional Triads
	Grant managers
	Program managers
	Community partners
	Site coordinators
		Field-led

Training on TA strategies
    - Emphasis on coaching and consultation
    - Audience includes independent TA consultants, intermediaries, Regional Triads, ASD staff
	TA providers
	Grant managers
	Program managers
	Community partners
	Site coordinators
		Field-led

Learning communities – step 1 of 3
    - Train various stakeholders to run effective learning communities
    - Use existing resources – from school districts, Public Profit, etc. –To develop trainings
	TA providers
	Grant managers
	Program managers
	Community partners
		Field-led

Learning communities – step 2 of 3 - Implement learning communities for practice-sharing and on-going support around CQI	TA providers Grant managers Program managers Community partners	Field-led

MID-TERM (In the next 2 or 3 years) In the mid-term, the focus should continue to be on skill building, shifting toward mastery, with an emphasis on sharing best practices and emerging success stories across multiple stakeholders.   As the field gains experience with the quality standards and quality improvement cycle, grantees and TA providers can benefit from learning what is working well among their peers.

Type of Support	Audience*	Lead Group
INFORMATION		

Needs assessment – step 2 of 2 ★
  - Develop strategy for collecting data from grantees, as defined in short-term "needs assessment – step 1"
  - Consider how data will be used
  - Consider existing and successful data collection methods
  - Align needs assessment tool to the quality standards
  - Consider TA service gaps identified in the TA Landscape
	TA providers
	Regional Triads
	ASD staff
	Grant managers
		CDE-led

Formative research – step 1 of 2 ★
  -Focused on quality standards implementation and CQI at the systems and program level, including:
    o Strengths
    o Challenges
    o Gaps
    o Recommendations
	ASD staff
	Regional Triads
	TA providers
	Grant managers
	K-12 leaders
	Funders
	Policy makers
		CDE-led

★ Assessment of costs associated with CQI process at all levels of implementation	ASD staff Regional Triads TA providers Grant managers K-12 leaders Funders Policy makers	Co-led
On-going evaluation and feedback loop about effectiveness of TA	All	Co-led
CQI process and tools documented by each grantee - Information supports staffing transitions	Program managers Community partners Site coordinators	Field-led
Shared success stories - Gather and publish best practices, success stories, testimonials from both grantees and TA providers	All	Field-led
Database of TA providers – step 1 of 2, including: ★ - Names, contact information, areas served, content areas and types of TA	Grant managers Program managers Community partners	Field-led
TOOLS		

On-line data management tool ★
  - Allows grantees to store and plan with data
  - Monitors progress towards improvement goals
	TA providers
	Regional Triads
	Grant managers
	Program managers
	Community partners
	Site coordinators
		Co-led

On-line clearinghouse for tools, resources, samples	TA providers Regional Triads Grant managers Program managers Community partners Site coordinators	Co-led

On-line CQI/Quality Standards 101 webinars or videos ★
  - Short segments on each QS
  - Address different types, sizes and geographic areas of CA providers
	Program managers
	Community partners
	Site coordinators
	Line staff
		Field-led

Digital badges aligned to quality standards	Program managers Community partners Site coordinators Line staff	Field-led

In-depth guide on data, including how to:
    - Do focus groups, interviews
    - Create and implement surveys
    - Use informal data gathering strategies
    - Process data
    - Use data to inform quality improvement
	TA providers
	Regional Triads
	Grant managers
	Program managers
	Community partners
	Site coordinators
		Field-led

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		
Identification of TA service gaps – step 2 of 2 - Implement plan to address service gaps identified in step 1	TA providers Regional Triads	Co-led

Distinguished programs – step 1 of 2
    - Convene an ad-hoc work group including ASD staff, program providers and TA providers to consider the need, value, criteria and structures of designating some programs as "distinguished"
    - As with "Distinguished Schools," this project – if well constructed– would showcase programs with exemplary practices and incent programs to seek high quality
	TA providers
	Grant managers
	Program managers
	Community partners
	Site coordinators
	Line staff
		Co-led

Learning communities – step 3 of 3 - Continue and expand learning communities for practice-sharing and on-going support around CQI	TA providers Grant managers Program managers Community partners Site coordinators Line staff	Field-led

LONG TERM (In the next 3 to 5 years) In the long-term, the focus should be on systems-building, gathering, documenting and sharing the resources and information that will help grantees sustain the CQI over multiple years. Grantees and TA providers need to build the quality standards and CQI into their systems so they are the accepted "way we do business."

Type of Support	Audience*	Lead Group
INFORMATION		

Formative and summative research – step 2 of 2 ★
  - Focused on quality standards implementation and CQI at the systems and program leveling, including:
     o Strengths
     o Challenges
     o Gaps
     o Cost of quality
     o Cost of CQI
     o Evidence of quality improvement
     o Recommendations
	ASD staff
	Regional Triads
	TA providers
	Grant managers
	K-12 leaders
	Funders
	Policy makers
		CDE-led

Updated database of TA providers – step 2 of 2, including: - Rating system for quality	Grant managers Program managers Community partners	Field-led
TOOLS		
Assessment tool fully aligned to quality standards ★	All	Co-led
★ Videos showcasing best practices in quality standards and CQI	Program managers Community partners Site coordinators	Field-led
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		

Distinguished programs – step 2 of 2
  - Depending on results of step 1, establish distinguished programs, including:
     o Transparent application process and clearly defined criteria and process for selection
     o Effective plan for disseminating learnings and best practices
	ASD staff
	Regional Triads
	TA providers
	Grant managers
	Program managers
	Community partners
	Site coordinators
		Co-led

On-going comprehensive TA to the field
  - Use results of the Needs Assessment, TA Landscape and formative/summative research to improve TA
  - Consider multiple TA strategies
  - Consider TA for TA providers to improve their practice
		Co-led

Audience – Line Staff, Site Coordinators, Program Managers, Grant Managers, Community Partners, TA Providers, Regional Leads, Regional Triads, ASD staff, K-12 Leaders, Funders, and Policymakers

RECOMMENDATION by Type of Support

Type of Support	Lead Group	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
Information	CDE-led	+ Needs assessment – step 1 of 2+ Detailed EC 8484 (a) (2) policy guidelines	+ Needs assessment – step 2 of 2 + Formative research – step 1 of 2	+ Formative and summative research – step 2 of 2
	Co-led	+ Brief EC 8484 (a) (2) information + Crosswalk between quality standards, core competencies and certified assurances + Comprehensive communications plan	+ Assessment of costs associated with CQI process + On-going evaluation and feedback loop about effectiveness of TA	
	Field-led	+ Shared understanding of quality standards and CQI	+ CQI process and tools documented by each grantee + Shared success stories + Database of TA providers – step 1 of 2	+ Updated database of TA providers – step 2 of 2
Tools	CDE-led			
	Co-led	+ CQI start-up tip sheet + Quality improvement plan template	+ On-line data management tool + On-line clearinghouse for tools, resources, samples	+ Assessment tool fully aligned to quality standards
	Field-led	+ CQI guidebook + Menu of standardized, replicable workshops on CQI process and each quality standard	+ On-line CQI/Quality Standards 101 webinars or videos + Digital badges aligned to quality standards + In-depth guide on data	+ Videos showcasing best practices
Technical Assistance	CDE-led			
	Co-led	+ TA provider convening + Identification of TA service gaps – step 1 of 2	+ Identification of TA service gaps – step 2 of 2 + Distinguished programs – step 1 of 2	+ Distinguished programs – step 2 of 2 + On-going comprehensive TA
	Field-led	+ Multiple types of TA on quality standards/CQI + Training on TA strategies + Learning communities – step 1 of 2 + Learning communities – step 2 of 2	+ Learning communities – step 3 of 3	

■ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CAN Quality Committee is extremely grateful to the many individuals who committed their time to develop these recommendations.

Work Group 3 included self-selected Work Group 1 and 2 members, who were willing to dedicate even more time to building California's quality improvement system. The members of Work Groups 1 and 2 were selected through a competitive application process that sought to gather perspectives and expertise from the diverse set of organizations, geographic areas, ethnicities, roles and experience that make up California's expanded learning stakeholders.