

MEETING THE MOMENT: COMMUNICATION AND GOVERNANCE IN A TIME OF CHANGE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 AND THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

DOUBLETREE BY HILTON

2001 POINT WEST WAY

SACRAMENTO, CA 95815

MEETING AGENDA

DAY I: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

8:30 am **Breakfast.** Light breakfast will be available in the main meeting space, the Garden & Terrace Rooms.

9:00 am **Convene Meeting.** Joel Knudson will convene the meeting with opening remarks, introductions, and an overview of the agenda.

SESSION I

Advancing a Proactive Narrative for Ongoing Investment in K-12 Public Education

The Collaborative's April 2026 convening created an opportunity to better understand the prevailing narratives around public education, the driving forces that enable those narratives to gain traction, and an alternative approach to talking about schooling in California that reflects the values, strengths, and opportunities for continued improvement associated with our school systems. Building on an initial set of messages crafted during that meeting, a working group of Collaborative members has been refining a series of "message maps" that can serve as a tool for effective communication about public education. We will begin with a discussion of those message maps and further ways in which education leaders can cultivate the informed support of audiences who are critical to our schools' success.

Session Purpose: Refine message maps that articulate essential messages about public education. Explore strategies for communicating in ways that can win the informed support of key audiences.

9:40 am **Message Map Refresher.** Drawing on research and strategies from the Center for Risk Communication, we will begin with a brief review of the evidence about how people process messages in high-stress situations and the role that message maps can play in articulating and organizing a communications strategy.

10:10 am **Message Map Discussion.** Participants will review a set of message maps created by a small working group of Collaborative members that articulate a set of messages and

supporting facts about public education and provide feedback on ways to refine and enhance these messages.

11:15 am **Break.**

11:30 am **Strategic Approaches to Leveraging Message Maps.** Participants will hear an overview of the message map from each small group and explore ways in which they can use a tool like a message map in service of communication efforts within their own contexts.

12:30 pm **Lunch.**

SESSION II

Articulating a Vision for Education Governance in California

A persistent challenge for K-12 public education in California has been promoting coherence in an environment that practitioners often experience as prioritizing compliance over capacity, embracing additive short-term initiatives rather than integrated long-term investments, and sending mixed signals about decision-making and accountability. An upcoming shift in the state's education governance structures seeks to address some of these dynamics by shifting the responsibilities for running the California Department of Education (CDE) away from the Superintendent for Public Instruction and creating a new governor-appointed Education Commissioner charged with overseeing CDE. An exploration of Assembly Bill (AB) 181 will begin with an overview of this new policy development and a consideration of what a productive relationship between the state and local education systems could entail.

Session Purposes: Build a shared understanding of upcoming changes to California K-12 public education governance. Articulate a vision for a maximally productive relationship between the state and districts across the state.

1:30 pm **Overview of AB 181.** A panel of Collaborative members and guests will set the context for our discussions by describing the motivation for recent changes to California's governance structures and the details of what those changes involve.

2:15 pm **A New Vision for the State's Education System.** Participants will consider what would need to be true of a relationship between the state education system and local districts for that relationship to promote improved results for students.

2:50 pm **Lessons from Other States.** Jeannie Myung of Policy Analysis for California Education will share lessons from new research on other states that have employed governance systems similar to the new approach in California.

3:20 pm **Break.**

SESSION III

Preparing a Leadership Team to Make Aspirations a Reality

AB 181 creates a new governor-appointed Education Commissioner who can take office in January 2027. In addition, the bill provides for the appointment of 16 deputies to the Education Commissioner. As the leaders who occupy these roles for the first time under a new governance structure, this team will establish a precedent for what those roles entail. Their work will shape the degree to which the relationships and experiences between CDE and local educators evolves from its current state. The selection of individuals for these positions, and the ways in which they approach their responsibilities as system leaders, therefore plays a vital role in shaping California's governance system in practice.

Session Purpose: Identify the attributes of an Education Commissioner and team of deputies who are best positioned to lead CDE in the direction of the vision the group explored in the previous session.

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| 3:35 pm | Small Group Discussion. Participants will convene in small groups to identify the skills, experiences, values, and dispositions that will enable a leadership team within CDE to be maximally effective. |
| 4:20 pm | Report Out and Discussion. Representatives from each small group will share key takeaways from their group's conversation. |
| 4:45 pm | Summary and Reflection on the Day's Discussion. |
| 5:00 pm | Adjourn for the Day. |
| 6:00 pm | Reception Followed by Dinner at Scott's Seafood, located at 4800 Riverside Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95822. |

DAY 2: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

8:30 am **Breakfast.** Light breakfast will be available in the main meeting space, the Garden & Terrace Rooms.

9:00 am **Updates from the Collaborative.**

SESSION IV

Identifying Opportunities for Change

Multiple vehicles exist for translating the potential of upcoming governance changes into concrete changes in educator experiences. AB 181 charges the Education Commissioner with delivering an interim and final report to the legislature in June and October 2027, respectively, with recommendations for additional changes to California's approach to K-12 education. These reports represent a vital opportunity to address issues that do not fall within the purview of AB 181. However, shifts in the relationship between the state and local education systems need not wait for new recommendations and statutory changes. The group will consider specific steps that can improve local educators' experiences with the state's governing structures on two different time horizons: (1) actions that can happen now and (2) developments that could happen down the road to facilitate the kinds of relationships the group explored in Session II.

Session Purposes: Identify concrete changes that that could improve the relationship between the state and local education systems. Identify additional areas of attention worthy of exploration in the Education Commissioner's interim and final reports to the legislature.

9:10 am **District Leader Panel.** A collection of district leaders will describe their experiences with CDE to build a shared understanding of what its current relationship with districts entails and prime the group's thinking about what could be different.

9:50 am **Small Group Discussion.** Participants will convene in small groups to identify actions that state agencies could take to improve the coherence of the state's education system and its relationship with districts without any changes to existing statute.

10:25 am **Break.**

10:40 am **Report Out and Discussion.** Representatives from each small group will share key takeaways from their group's conversation.

11:10 am **Recommendations for Long-Term Improvement.** The group will explore additional topics that the incoming

SESSION V

Sharing Insights in Productive Ways

Dialogue during the Collaborative's most recent two meetings underscores the importance of honing messages that can earn the informed support of an intended audience, as well as selecting messengers who can reach that audience in intended ways. Those principles also apply to our discussion of changes with respect to K-12 education governance in California. The period of time immediately following the election and in the first months of 2027 represents a unique window of opportunity to influence the direction of the state's education system and the role that a new Education Commissioner will play in that system. The meeting will thus close with a discussion about how best to communicate the ideas generated during this convening in ways that are most likely to translate to action.

Session Purposes: Explore messages, messengers, and formats most likely to be successful for enlisting informed support for proposed improvements to California's education system.

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| 12:00 pm | Key Messages. The group will consider the most important takeaways and recommendations from this meeting's discussions that should inform the decisions of state leaders as they move forward. |
| 12:30 pm | Lunch. |
| 1:00 pm | Audiences and Messengers. The group will consider the audiences who are most important to reach with recommendations, the messengers whose perspectives are most likely to resonate with those audiences, and the formats most likely to reach those audiences. |
| 1:45 pm | Summary and Reflection on the Day's Discussion. |
| 2:00 pm | Adjourn Meeting. |