

## Investing in Equity-Driven Systems Change

### California Districts' Fiscal Context

California education funding and regulatory processes have shifted significantly, and school leaders are overwhelmed by requirements decision-making urgency. California invested over \$5.3 billion in the Learning Loss Mitigation Funding (LLMF) "to support academic achievement and mitigate learning loss related to COVID-19 school closures." This funding presents a unique opportunity for schools and districts to tackle longstanding student outcome gaps exacerbated by recent learning loss-head on. The time is NOW.

- Addressing learning loss and disrupting historic systemic inequities are the most important priorities across all levels of education. Schools are on track if funding is used as an investment in closing opportunity, access and outcome gaps, rather than dollars for short-term materials and supplies.
- Per-pupil spending has increased across all funding sources, for all LEAs, especially those serving high need students. Federal and state funding for schools was held stable, a.k.a. "harmless," and districts received additional federal investments beyond that.
- The overwhelming majority of reporting requirements and mandates have been suspended and flexed, allowing for both significant investment flexibility and opening up the possibility of budget backfill and diversion of funds to other priorities.

### Key considerations for school leaders when making their LLMF investment:

- This funding is extremely flexible allowing schools to get creative and be as responsive as possible to their unique student needs. Leaders must ensure that funding is protected for learning loss mitigation and promotion of educational equity. Leaders should resist the temptation and pressure to spend these dollars on short-term purchases or on backfilling other immediate needs.
- Schools need to do their research/planning on investments that will address learning loss now and throughout the school year (longer term) vs. short-term crisis one time or one-off spending, or expenses that could otherwise be paid for with other funding sources such as PPE for connectivity/devices.
- Leaders should look for programs or strategies that have demonstrated measurable impact on student outcomes in their school or district, and deepen or broaden those efforts if they exist.
- Much of LLMF must be spent by December 30, 2020 and schools need to sequence their funding strategically. School business officers recommend that LLMF be first and top priority.

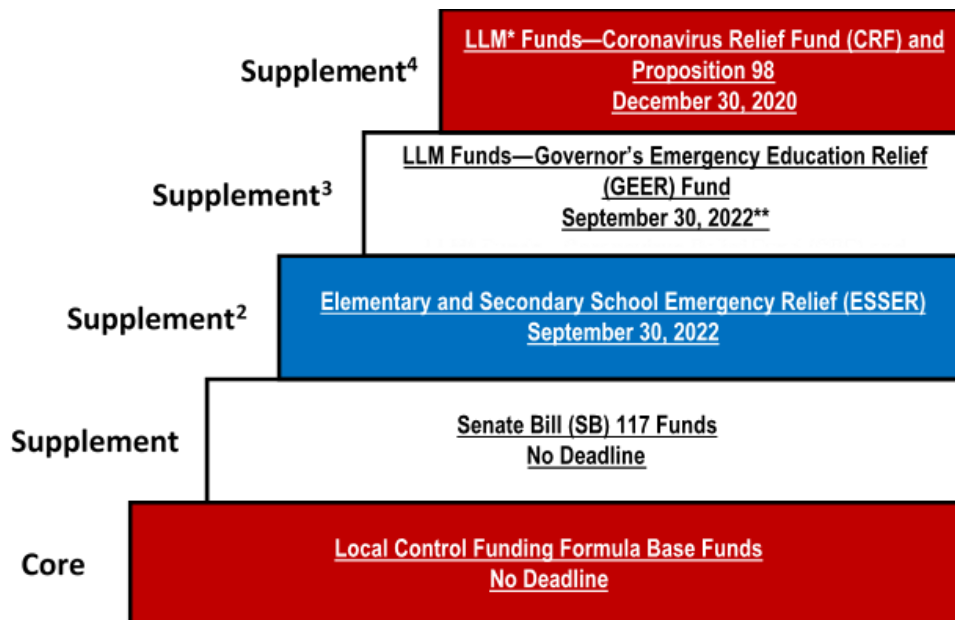
### Our Equity-Driven Recommendation

With so much flexibility and urgency comes a great professional responsibility for schools and districts to drill down on what will be the best return on investment for equity. Decisions need to address short-term learning loss mitigation and longstanding needs and build staff and system capacity to advance educational equity during COVID and beyond. We believe the best LLMF investments are:

- building the capacity of a school to implement one **geographically neutral and geographically fluid instructional and guidance model**, that works in all three settings (virtually, in person, and hybrid).
- hiring or repurposing **para-educator staff (including after school staff)** for small group academic coaching during the school day (in all three settings), at the direction of classroom teacher.
- acquiring **portable classroom space** (i.e. tents or pop-ups) to accommodate social distancing
- **coaching teachers and instructional teams** on small learning groups and system for intensive and customized learning supports
- creating or curating the **highest quality online content** to replace much large group instruction, so that live differentiated teaching and counseling can be done in mostly in small groups
- developing and planning for **adaptive common assessments and curriculum** – regardless of testing mandates, the need to use data more critical than ever, to inform practice
- planning on how to **maximize the impact of every available minute** with students, with sound lesson and unit design
- systematizing the **social-emotional supports** provided to students

**Recommended Funding Sources** for Orenda Education partnership:

1. **Learning Loss Mitigation Funds** - TLC focuses on equity, improved instruction, systemizing learning and social supports, and maximizing learning time; it is strongly aligned with the objectives of this funding source. Schools should prioritize spending the Corona Relief Funds (CRF) portion of the LLM funds since they are targeted to respond to COVID and need to be spent by December 30, 2020. After the CRF funds are spent down, then LEAs/schools can maintain funding needs and levels by using the Governor Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) which can be used through September 2022.
2. **County Office of Education Differentiated Assistance (DA)** - Funding partnership needs to include COE and LEAs. All DA funding levels and identified schools from 2019-20 will rollover to 2020-21. This funding is time bound and must go to school improvement efforts so all Orenda Ed training, planning, and capacity-building services address the state and federal requirements.
3. **Comprehensive Support Improvement (CSI) Funds** - This program requires districts with CSI schools to develop a plan for improving student outcomes. All CSI sites and funding has rolled over from 2019-20. This funding is time bound and restricted. It is a prime source for Orenda Ed technical assistance to help schools and LEAs to conduct data and needs assessment to develop an actionable and impactful improvement plan.
4. **Title 1 & Elementary and Secondary School Emergency (ESSER)-** This program supports planning and programs that improve the educational opportunities of low-income and disadvantaged students. LEA annual allocations have been both held harmless and supplemented with additional dollars. Federal stimulus dollars went directly to LEAs based on Title 1 shares formula. This funding must be spent by September 2022.
5. **LCFF Supplemental and Concentration funding** - Improving the outcomes of high need and underserved student groups is the cornerstone of all of Orenda Ed's professional services. This state funding is restricted to support *increased and improved services* for unduplicated student groups (Low Income, English Learner, and Foster Youth). Rules and oversight for this funding source has been tightened further, encouraging schools to be more transparent and accountable for how this money is to be spent.
6. **Title 2** - The purpose of Title II, Part A is to increase the academic achievement of all students by helping schools and districts: (1) improve teacher and principal quality through professional development and other activities, and (2) providing low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Funding levels have been kept level so this is a stable funding source to use over multiple year planning efforts.



\*Learning Loss Mitigation (LLM)