



MAKING IT HAPPEN.
EACH STUDENT. EVERY DAY.



Honoring The Educational Journey of Each Student

Special Education Local Plan Areas, or SELPAs, have played an essential role in the provision of a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities in California since 1977. The leadership, advocacy, and coordination of services for students with disabilities provided by SELPAs requires expertise, teamwork, and collaboration on many levels. Superintendents, boards of education, governance councils, legislators and policymakers, California Department of Education officials, educational agencies, parent and community groups, job-alike councils, legal and educational experts, specialists and service providers, and students and self-advocates all play significant roles in ensuring that all students with disabilities, regardless of where they reside or attend school, will have access to high-quality educational programs tailored to their unique needs. Perhaps the most effective way to explain the role of SELPA is through the stories of our students.

SELPAs provide targeted technical assistance, facilitate collaborative decision-making, and connect families and students with local educational agencies and the larger community.



Compassionate Service

Bella was identified with hearing loss by her local pediatrician through a newborn infant hearing screening. Her pediatrician referred Bella's parents to the local regional center and the SELPA Early Start Program. Bella received timely assessment, direct instruction, and deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) services under an individual family service plan, and her parents received consultation and support, all from the SELPA team.

Bella attended a DHH regional classroom program at a comprehensive elementary school in a nearby community that was part of the SELPA continuum of programs and services provided for all eligible children residing in the boundaries of the SELPA. SELPA leadership worked closely with the superintendents who make up its Governing Board to authorize expenditures for the program, such as specialized playground equipment, interpreters, and assistive hearing devices. And, throughout her educational career, the specialized low incidence staff working in programs where Bella attended were actively recruited, hired, and trained through the SELPA.





Making it Available

Steadfast Advocacy

The growth in the incidence of autism over time created a bubble of high school aged students with extensive support needs who had been served in classrooms on comprehensive elementary and middle school campuses. Trevor is part of that bubble, and his family has worked collaboratively with the SELPA Director since Trevor's diagnosis at age 3. The SELPA provided neutral facilitation to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) and family when Trevor was in preschool programming, and helped them achieve respectful communication and a shared plan for Trevor's benefit.

The SELPA Governing Board discussed the need for a regional autism classroom program at the high school level. But, with the new school year fast approaching and no clear options, the SELPA Director moved quickly to preserve the continuum of placement options, and the family's trust, by negotiating with a local superintendent and business official for appropriate classroom space on one of their high school campuses. This helped provide a smooth transition not only for Trevor and that LEA's students but also for students with similar needs within the SELPA.

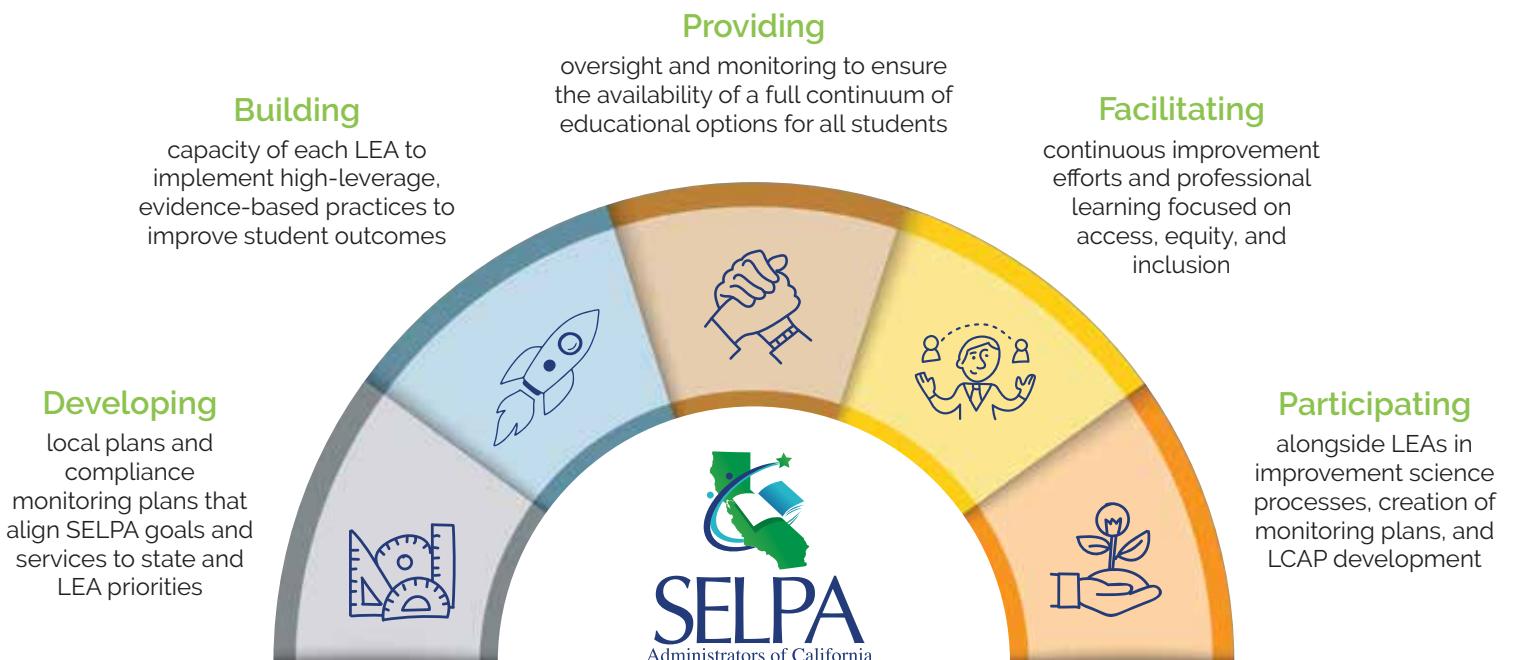


Making it Matter

Active Partnership

A particular LEA was identified as being significantly disproportionate in the area of suspensions and separate school placements for African-American students with disabilities. Working closely with their SELPA Administrator, SELPA Program Specialist, and Technical Assistance Facilitator, the LEA engaged in an in-depth, four phase process that culminated in a well-reasoned, two-year action plan to address these serious problems.

Joshua, a 5th grade student in the identified group, and Samuel, an at-risk 3rd grade general education student, also African-American, both benefited from appropriate interventions provided through the SELPA. Whether through reform of the LEA's student study team practices, implementation of schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports, consultation between school staff and a SELPA Board Certified Behavior Analyst, or training in best practices in conducting culturally sensitive assessments, advocacy from the SELPA level improved outcomes for both students.





Proactive Design

A SELPA's Directors' Council voted unanimously to continue to provide both a Fast ForWord summer program and a Response To Intervention speech articulation summer boot camp program for special education and general education at-risk students through referrals from its member LEAs' staff. Over 100 students participated in at least one of these interventions and three quarters made significant progress, including Lidia, who was referred to these SELPA programs by her 2nd grade general education teacher, who also considered Lidia for referral for special education assessment.

The following year, Lidia's third grade teacher received advanced training and coaching in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) from the SELPA's Program Specialists who were themselves trained through the SELPA Content Leads Open Access Project provided by Placer County SELPA. The SELPA Directors' Council agreed to pursue a pilot of UDL across the region after careful review of SELPA-wide performance demonstrated the need to focus on the area of least restrictive environment.



Rebuilding Trust

Juan attends junior high school in a diverse urban school district whose SELPA includes four other LEAs. Juan's district has experienced significant turnover within its special education department. The SELPA director has consistently supported each successive administrator in working through serious compliance issues, state complaints, and due process concerns. This support has included assigning dedicated SELPA program specialist staffing, program quality reviews, and presentations to the Board of Education. At one point, the SELPA director was forced to file a state complaint against the district for not providing adequate support and services to students within the district.

After watching her son experience school failure, refusal, and avoidance due to persistent disability-related bullying, Juan's mother requested further assessment and appropriate services. Receiving no response to her requests, she sought assistance through her local SELPA. The advocacy of SELPA leadership and program specialist staff in facilitating Juan's IEP and obtaining an appropriate program for Juan made all the difference in Juan's day to day school experience.

A Statewide Network of Support

With 136 SELPAs across California to serve you



The mission of SELPA Administrators of California is to champion educational access and opportunities for students with disabilities, and we do this by collaborating with stakeholders to influence policy and practice on behalf of students with disabilities.

www.selpa.info | facebook.com/selpastrong