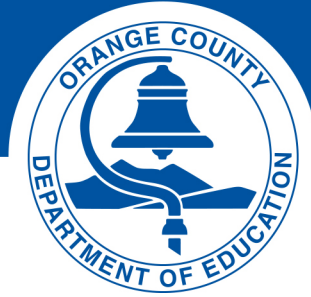


# NEWS RELEASE

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## **OCDE seeks applications for sub-grants aligned with California SUMS Initiative** Funding will help educational agencies implement academic and behavioral supports

COSTA MESA, Calif. – The Orange County Department of Education is accepting applications from school districts, publicly funded charter schools and county offices of education for training grants tied to a new statewide initiative designed to address students’ academic, behavioral and social needs.

As part of the California Scale-Up MTSS Statewide (SUMS) Initiative, an initial allocation of \$18 million will be divided into a limited number of sub-grants to help local education agencies design and implement their own Multi-Tiered System of Support.

Multi-Tiered System of Support, or MTSS, is a comprehensive framework that has been successfully used by numerous schools and districts to identify students who need academic or behavioral support, initiate a response plan, track progress and make improvements over time. Rather than relying on a single program or practice, MTSS aligns multiple strategies and leverages staff collaboration and data-driven decision-making to help schools increase attendance, prevent dropouts, lower disciplinary rates, improve school climates and boost academic performance.

In December 2015, the California Department of Education announced it would accept applications from county offices of education to lead a new project called “Developing, Aligning, and Improving Systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports.” Funding for the project was appropriated in response to recommendations from a March 2015 California Statewide Special Education Task Force Report that cited the need for a unified MTSS framework capable of aligning the state’s educational systems and services, many of which remained uncoordinated.

OCDE learned in April 2016 that its proposal was selected to receive an initial \$10 million in funding. The following August, the governor’s budget allocated an additional \$20 million to support the scope of work, which includes establishing tiers of trainers. This investment by the California Department of Education positioned OCDE as the lead agency to support districts in California as they scale up their MTSS frameworks.

“The primary goal of the SUMS Initiative is to implement and scale new and existing MTSS practices using an evidence-based continuous improvement process,” said Edgar Montes, who is the director for the California SUMS Initiative. “Awardees will work to develop, align and improve academic and behavioral resources, programs, supports and services utilizing a coherent MTSS framework that engages all systems leading to improved student outcomes.”

OCDE plans to issue its sub-grants in three rounds, with two additional application periods coming in the months ahead. Applicants may apply for one-time funding of up to \$25,000 as a single local education agency, or they can join a consortium of two or more agencies and receive up to \$50,000 per application.

Grant recipients will work in concert with OCDE and receive technical support from its partners — these include the Butte County Office of Education and the SWIFT Center at the University of Kansas — to install, implement and sustain MTSS frameworks and scale up evidenced-based practices within their schools. The objective is to build strategies, supports and services that enable all students to succeed while promoting meaningful family and community engagement.

Applications can be found at [www.ocde.us/SUMS](http://www.ocde.us/SUMS) and must be submitted to OCDE's Instructional Services Division by 5 p.m. on March 31, 2017. The first round of award notifications will be posted in May 2017.

For more information, visit [www.ocde.us/SUMS](http://www.ocde.us/SUMS).

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