

# Coaching at Scale

## A Strategy for Strengthening the Early Childhood Workforce

# Presenters & Panelists

## Moderator:

- **Sarah Neville-Morgan**, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Opportunities for All Branch at the California Department of Education

## Presenters & Panelists:

- **Abby Schachner**, Senior Researcher & Co-Lead of the Early Learning Team, Learning Policy Institute
- **Elizabeth Blakemore**, Director, Early Learning and Family Support, El Dorado County Office of Education, California
- **Ami Brooks**, Director, Pre-K-3rd Grade Partnership, Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

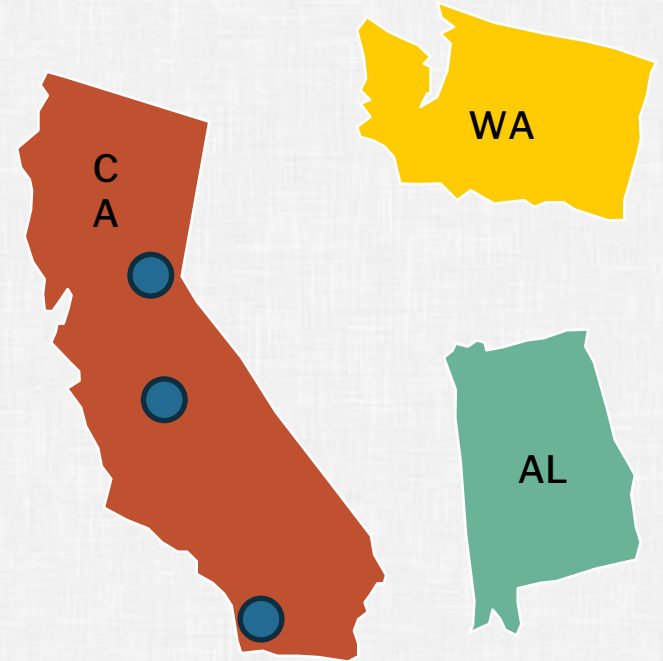
# Session Flow

- ▷ Overview of LPI coaching study
- ▷ Panel introduction
- ▷ Overview of coaching contexts
  - California and El Dorado County
  - Alabama
- ▷ Panel Discussion
- ▷ Questions from audience



# LPI Coaching Study and Report

- ▶ Purpose: Examine coaching implementation at scale to identify implications for policy and practice
- ▶ Reviewed literature of features of effective coaching
- ▶ Examined coaching in 3 CA counties (El Dorado, Fresno, San Diego) and 2 states (AL & WA)



# What do we mean by coaching?

Coaching involves a **collaborative relationship** between an **expert** and a practitioner with the aim of **developing specific knowledge and skills** through the use of planning, observation, action (e.g., modeling), feedback, and reflection





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*It's the first time in my life and being in this field that I actually feel **connected** to the outside world. And it's because of my coach. ... She's made me feel **validated**. She's made me feel **valued**. She's made me feel **important**. She **understands** how I teach. She **sees** how I teach.*

*–Educator in Rural El Dorado County*

# Features of Effective Coaching



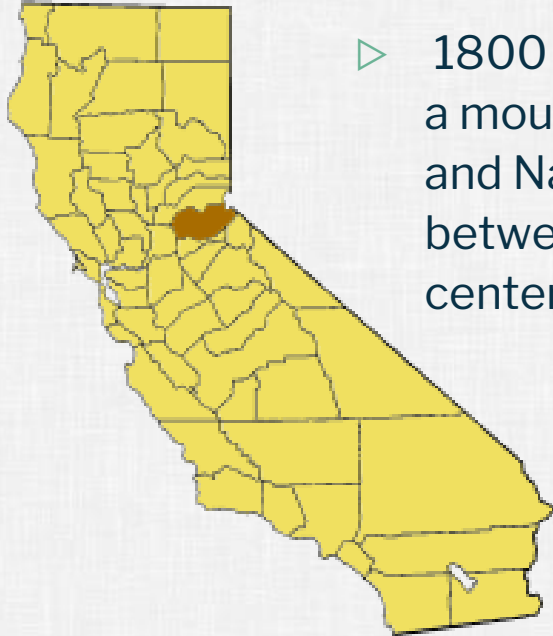


# California

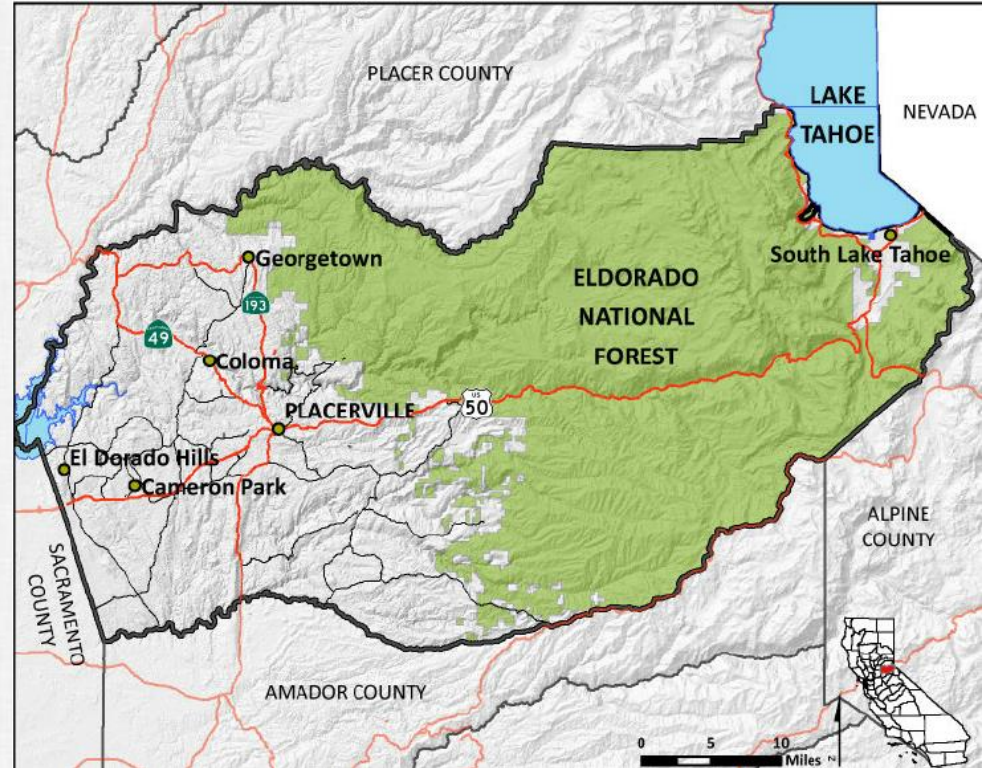




# El Dorado County



- ▶ 1800 sq miles with a mountain range and National Forest between population centers



# El Dorado's Coaching Program

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## Guiding Principles

- 1) Coaching for all program types ( FFN, FCC, Centers, Head Start, State Preschool)
- 2) Coaching based on the needs, interests and capacity of educators/providers
- 3) Strengths based and reflective with a foundation of Practice Based Coaching
- 4) Job embedded, professional development
- 5) Dosage necessary to impact teacher practices ( twice a month visits)

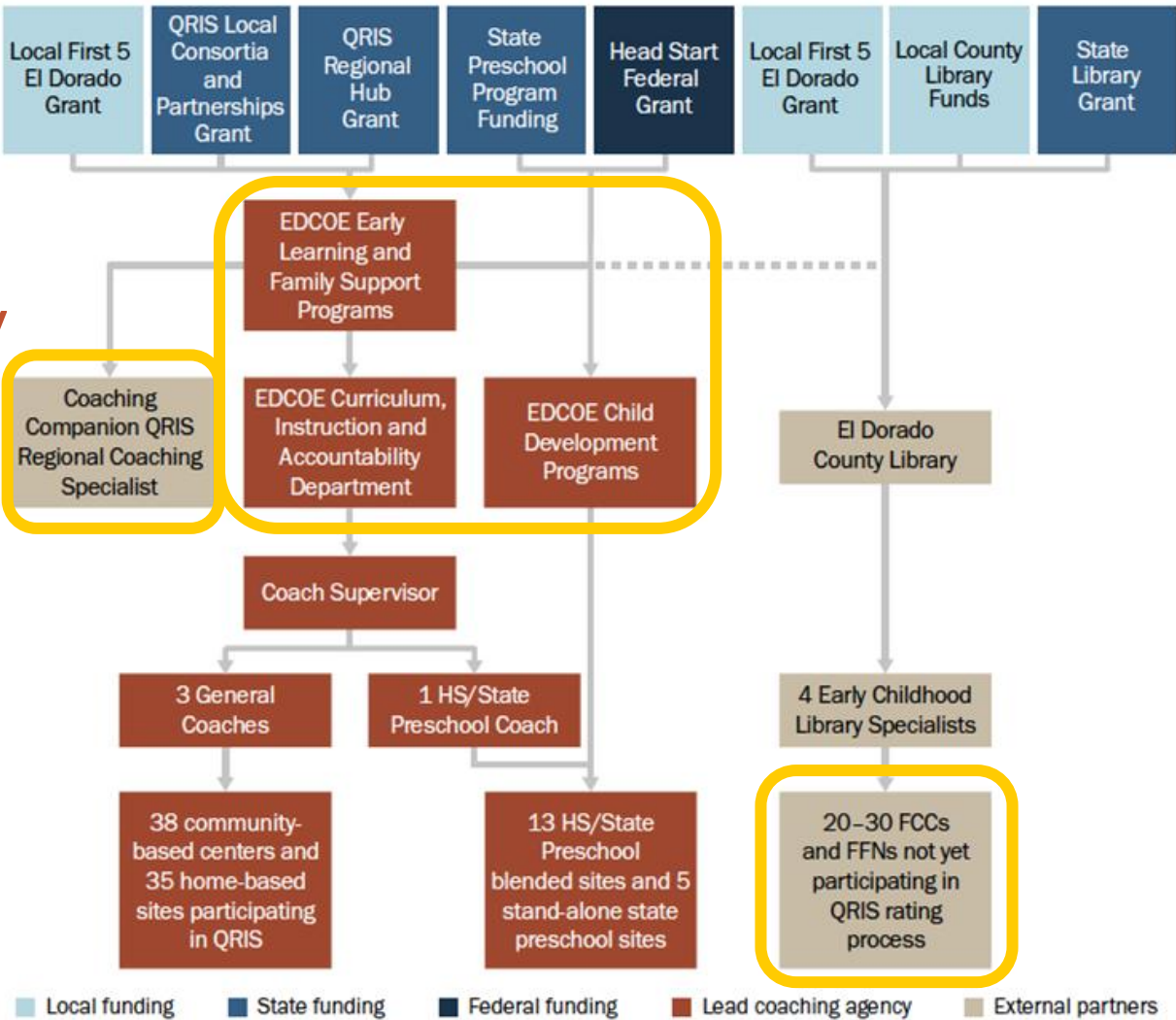
# Funding and Structure

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- 1) Braid multiple funding streams to ensure that all sites receive coaching ( DSS, CDE, First 5 CA, First 5 EL Dorado)
- 2) Strategically placed coaches within Curriculum and Instruction Departments
- 3) Partnered with Library to meet FFN and FCC providers.
- 4) CA Coaching Companion supported serving more providers/educators

# El Dorado County Coaching Infrastructure



# CA Coaching Companion



- 1) Began as a 14 county Regional Pilot in partnership with Early Edu/University of Washington
- 2) Modified the platform with California Resources
- 3) Developed Coaching Cycle Sets on high quality interactions, inclusion, Infant-Toddler Care, Dual Language Learners, Leadership and Equity and more.
- 4) Currently funded by Department of Social Services, with 511 coaches/educators across California



# Post-Pandemic Changes

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- 1) Workforce shortages impact ability to provide reflective coaching at community based sites
- 2) Developed some group and team coaching efforts at sites
- 3) Increased focus on coaching and supporting site directors
- 4) Integrated coaching along with professional development series
- 5) Funding has not kept pace with wage increases resulting in reduced coaching across the program

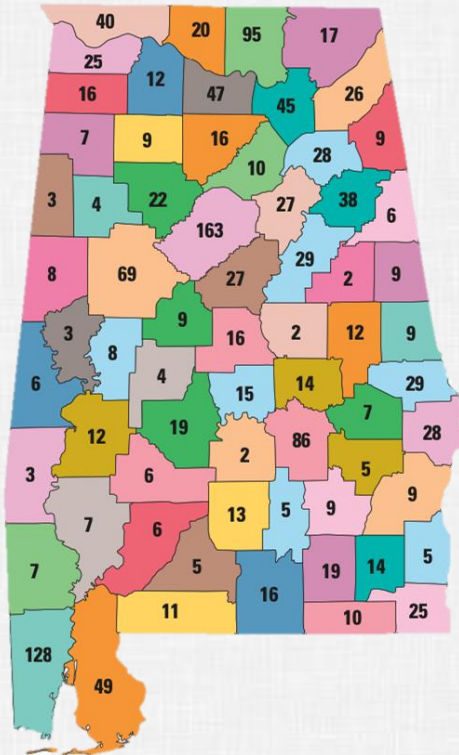


# Alabama

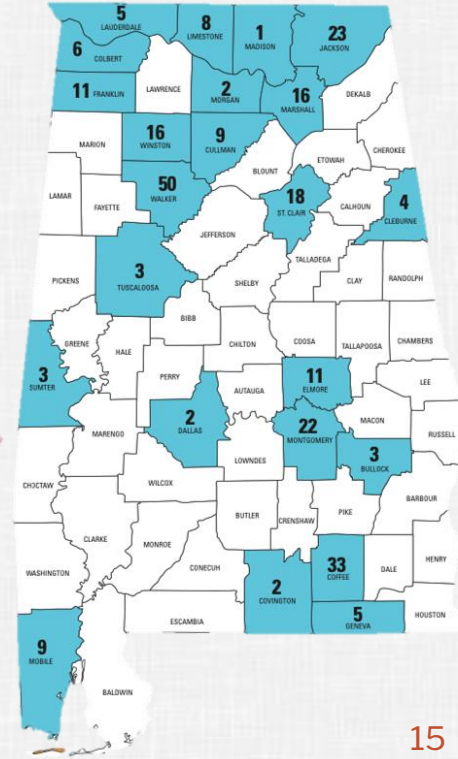
## Alabama Reflective Coaching (ARC) Approach



First Class Pre-K  
Classrooms by County  
2022-23



Strong Start Strong Finish  
Pre-K–3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Early  
Learning Classrooms  
2022-23

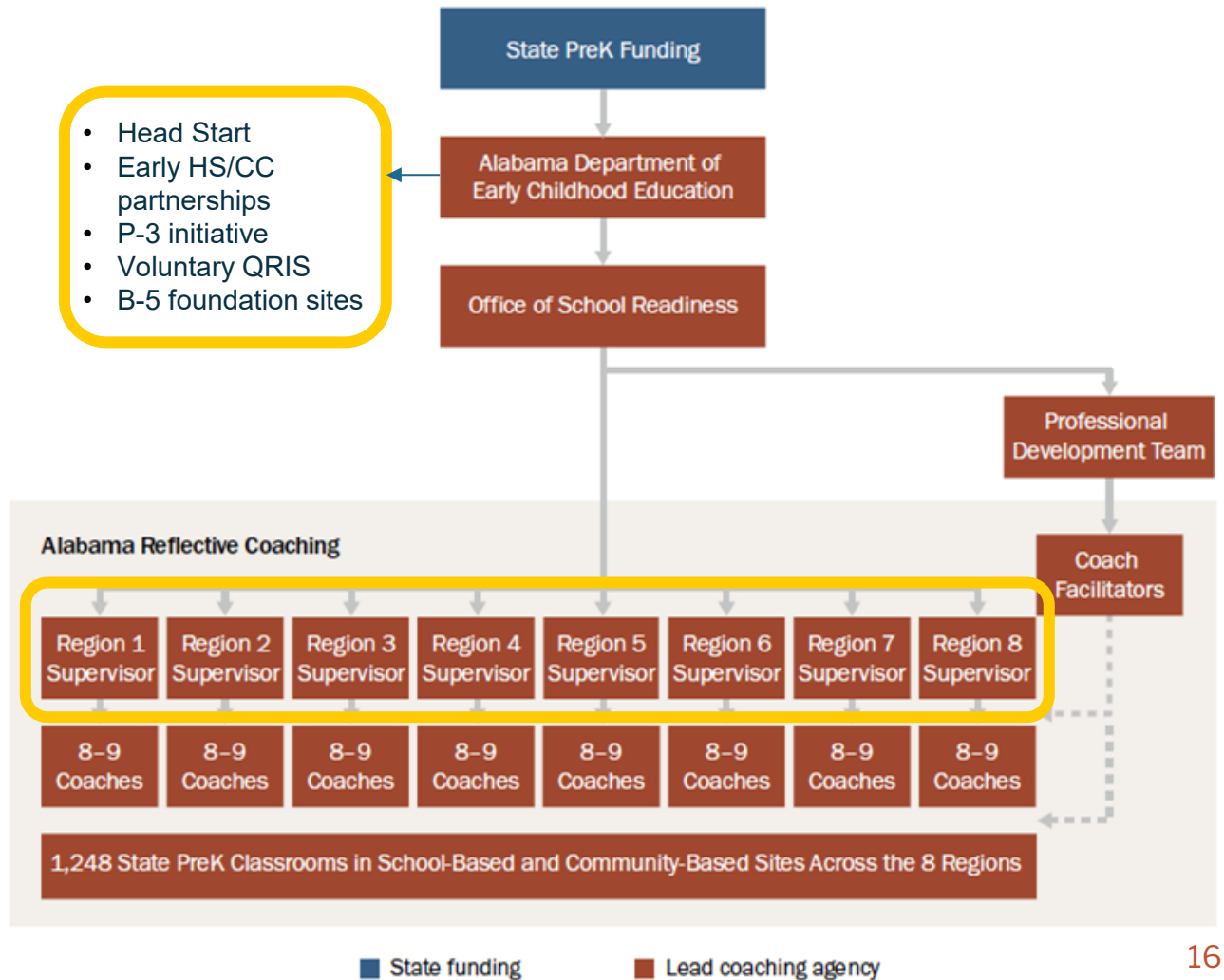


Sources: Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. (2021). [Alabama Early Childhood B-8 Coaching Framework](#).

Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. (2023). [2023 Annual Report](#).

# Alabama State Coaching Infrastructure

- Head Start
- Early HS/CC partnerships
- P-3 initiative
- Voluntary QRIS
- B-5 foundation sites



# B-8 Coach Professional Development Framework





# Panel Discussion





# Questions & Discussion

# Thank You!

- ▷ Abby Schachner  
[aschachner@learningpolicyinstitute.org](mailto:aschachner@learningpolicyinstitute.org)
- ▷ Elizabeth Blakemore  
[eblakemore@edcoe.org](mailto:eblakemore@edcoe.org)

## Resources

- ▷ [LPI Coaching at Scale report](#)
- ▷ [Alabama Early Childhood B-8 Coaching Framework](#)







# Additional Slides to Have on Hand

# Decision Points in Early Learning Coaching Systems

## Who will receive coaching?

- State preschool lead and assistant teachers (AL)
- Early educators participating in QRIS, including center- and home-based educators (WA, Fresno, El Dorado)
- Site leaders (San Diego)

## How is coaching dosage determined?

- Based on need ranging from
- 1-2 sessions/week to 2/year

## How is coaching delivered?

- Primarily face-to-face, in-person supplemented with virtual modes

## What guides the content of coaching?

- Quality standards, linked to other PD efforts, and specific drivers

# Decision Points in Early Learning Coaching Systems (cont'd)

## How is coaching effectiveness promoted?

- Creating structures to support coaching workforce & relationship development
- Using reflective practice
- Using individualized, strengths-based practice

## How are coaches employed and funded?

- Coaches employed regionally
- AL & WA primarily state general funds
- CA counties primarily local First 5 funding

## What qualifications do coaches have?

- Minimum of BA degree
- Prior practical ECE experience
- Effective and developmentally appropriate pedagogy skills
- Strong interpersonal skills

## How are coaches provided professional development & support?

- Onboarding training & ongoing PD
- 1:1 supports – reflective supervision, mental health consultation
- Peer supports - peer mentors, learning communities

# Common Enablers and Challenges of Implementing Scaled Coaching Systems

## Common Challenges

- Insufficient funding
- Insufficient time to participate in coaching
- Restrictive policies that limit intensity and focus
- Difficulty in recruiting qualified coaches
- Negotiating partnerships

Implementing  
scaled coaching  
systems

## Common Enablers

- Political support that lays the groundwork
- Partnerships that strengthen and broaden coaching systems



# Recommendations for Policy & Practice

# Increasing Access to Coaching

1. **Provide dedicated funding for site-based coaching**, with the goal of making instructional coaching accessible to all programs for quality enhancement, as well as to educators in need of more
2. **Provide specialized coaching for site leaders** in addition to early educators, including school principals





# Building the Coach Workforce & Capacity

- 3. Create coherence between coaching and quality rating and improvement systems** - have content of coaching informed by quality rating criteria, standards & assessment tools & ensure traditional PD is paired with coaching)
- 4. Set standards for the expertise and experience of coaches and provide ongoing coach support – coaches need specific skills & competencies** (e.g., expertise in child development, developmentally appropriate instruction, experience working with adult learners)

# Building the Coach Workforce & Capacity

(cont.)

- 5. Identify regional strategies to recruit a diverse coaching workforce** – partner strategically with organizations to employ coaches who represent, and are trusted by, participants across the mixed delivery system
- 6. Develop a state clearinghouse of coaching resources to enable high-quality and consistent coaching** - states have role in developing or disseminating resources to support effective coaching, build the capacity of the coaching workforce, and bring consistency to the overall coaching approach across the state
- 7. Fund and support a regional system of professional development for coaches** - provide funding and technical assistance to build regional systems or other networks of PD for coaches that build from statewide resources but are tailored to local context



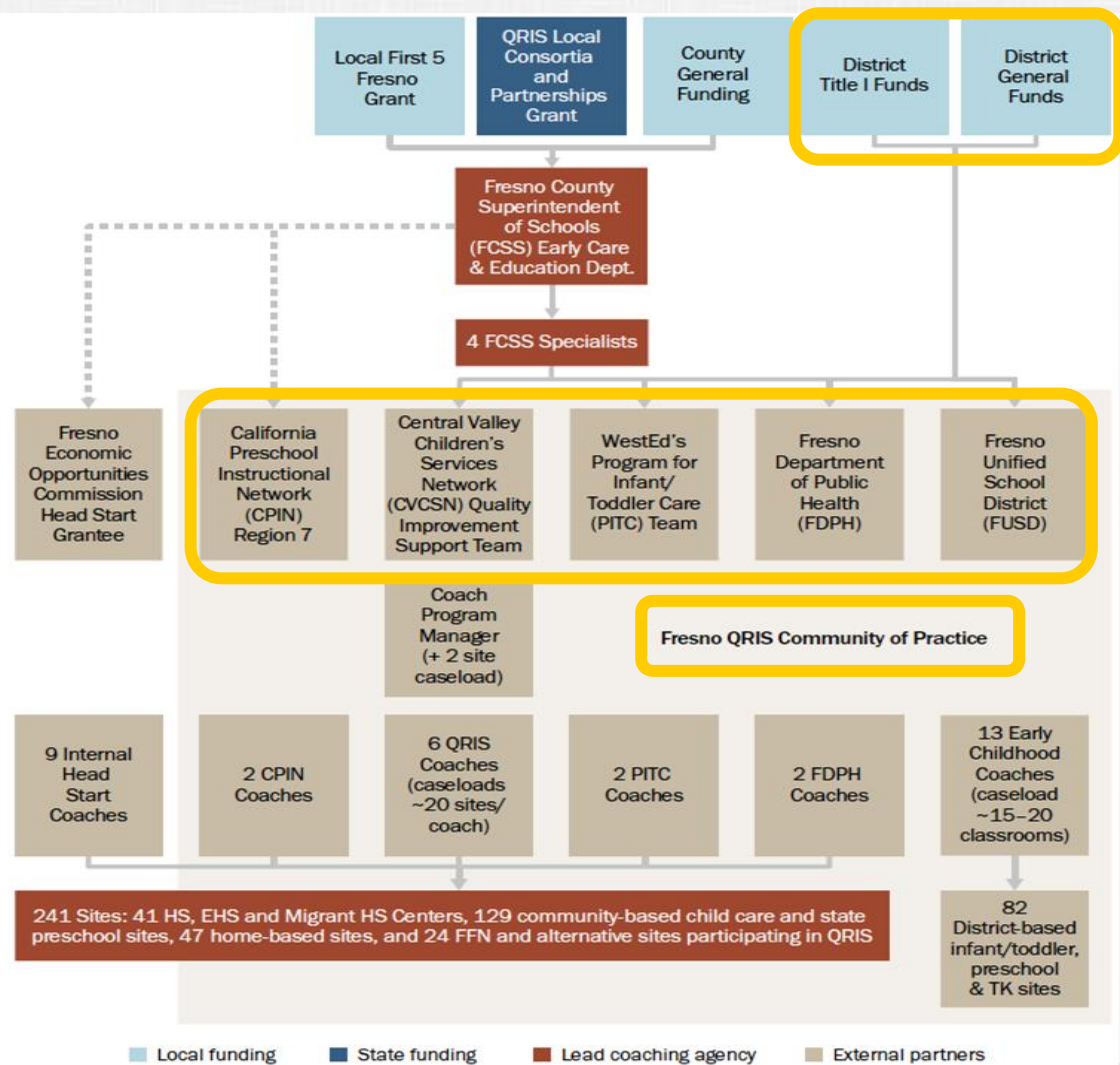
# Improving Data & Accountability

- 8. Collect and analyze data and scale what works**, including data associated with effectiveness in coaching research (e.g., focused observations, reflection, feedback, coaching plans)



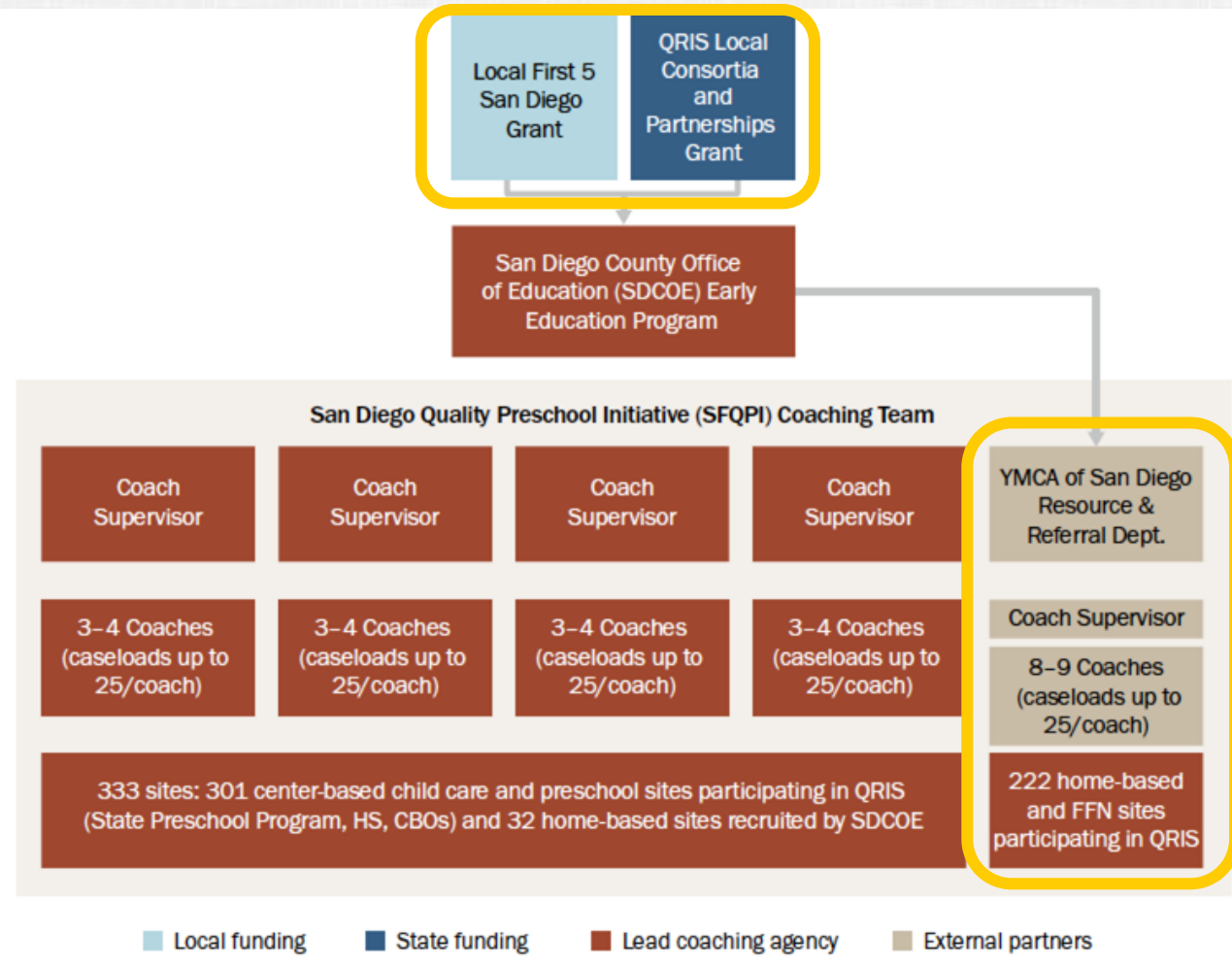
# Additional Coaching Infrastructures

# Fresno County Coaching Infrastructure





# San Diego County Coaching Infrastructure





# Washington State Coaching Infrastructure

