



# Initial Impact of the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA) Policy on Preparation Programs

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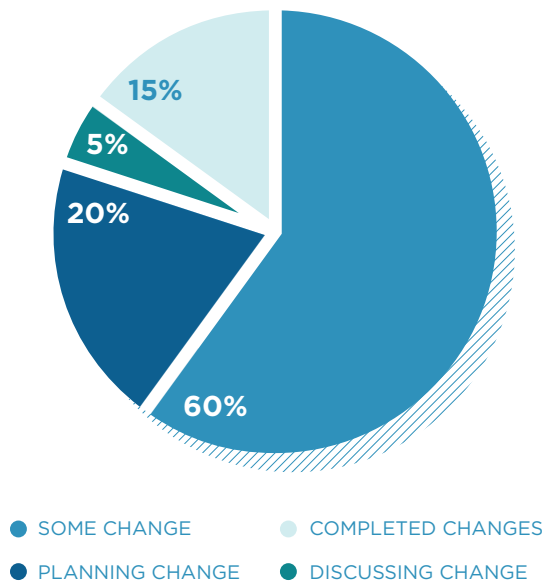
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## Executive Summary

For the past six years, California has been revising its preparation system for school and district administrators, including developing the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA), the first required performance assessment for preliminary administrator certification. In this study, researchers from the California Comprehensive Center at WestEd, the Principal Leadership Institute at the University of California at Berkeley, and the Regional Educational Laboratory West at WestEd sought to examine the initial impact of the CalAPA policy by identifying early changes (i.e., changes made through March 30, 2018) in administrator preparation programs' practices.

Figure 1. By March 2018, three quarters of respondents reported completing all or some of the changes to their Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Programs in preparation for the administration of the CalAPA



## Summary of Findings

In March 2018, researchers conducted individual phone interviews with lead staff from 20 sampled administrator preparation programs to discuss the most significant impacts of the CalAPA policy to date in the areas of coursework, fieldwork, resources, and support. Some highlights of the findings from these interviews are listed below.

### Coursework

- **Curriculum: Program content.** Respondents indicated that changes, ranging from minor to major, have been made to their program's curriculum as a result of the CalAPA, including making curriculum shifts and ensuring stronger alignment to the tasks in the CalAPA.
- **Instruction.** Leaders described various current and anticipated instructional changes, which are tightly interwoven with performance expectations embedded in the CalAPA.
- **Course-based assignments and formative assessments.** Respondents reported that program assignments and formative feedback were changing in order to better guide and support candidates in passing the CalAPA and meeting the other Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) expectations. These changes include altering the order of assignments, deepening existing tasks, and creating new projects.

### Fieldwork

- Program approaches to fieldwork generally centered on aligning fieldwork to the CalAPA policy, needing

to provide additional professional learning for fieldwork supervisors, and linking fieldwork more tightly to curriculum and instructional practices.

### Resources

- **Human resources.** Programs reported the need to add staff, shift assignments, and create new positions; they described varied approaches to funding these additional human resources needed to implement the CalAPA policy.
- **Material and equipment.** Respondents' comments about changes in material and equipment resources due to the implementation of CalAPA policy varied greatly, but generally centered on textbooks and technology.
- **Time allocations.** Program respondents all described an increase in staff time devoted to understanding and implementing the CalAPA policy.

### Support

- **CTC informational activities.** Many respondents attended a variety of CalAPA orientation activities offered by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and reported that the activities provided a foundational understanding of the CalAPA policy and what was required of them.
- **Increased CTC communication and consultation.** While programs recognized helpful early support, respondents also indicated a desire for increased and timely communications from CTC about policy.

- **Collaboration across programs.** Many asked for opportunities to connect with colleagues across programs as they make changes and implement new approaches.

### Issues for Further Discussion

In addition to the study's findings, the report also provides commentary about key issues in the field of education that could affect administrator preparation programs and CalAPA implementation.

### Questions About the Assessment

- **Feedback process.** Many leaders expressed an interest in candidates receiving formative and timely feedback on their CalAPA results and wondered how remediation will be handled for students who do not pass the CalAPA.
- **Scope.** Leaders expressed concern about the scope of the CalAPA. Some respondents worried that the CalAPA is more like a summative assessment for experienced administrators than a preliminary assessment for candidates at the start of their administrative careers.
- **Leadership cycles.** Respondents expressed specific concerns about the CalAPA leadership cycles and the lack of flexibility, with some suggesting merging cycles 1 and 2 or eliminating cycle 2 altogether.

### Program-Level Constraints

- **Series of changes.** Respondents indicated that implementing the CalAPA policy required significant

changes in practice, which followed quickly on a series of other comprehensive revisions to the new statewide administrator credential system.

- **Staffing structures.** Respondents reported that their administrator preparation programs were constrained by having limited full-time faculty and being reliant on adjunct instructors and staff with limited availability for program development or research.
- **Limited professional opportunities.** Preliminary preparation programs operate in an underresourced professional culture with few professional networking and support options that specifically target administrator preparation programs and staff.
- **Lack of research funding.** The ability of the education field to prioritize a robust research agenda to study and guide administrator preparation is constrained by limited leadership development funds.

### Candidate-Level Constraints

- **Competing commitments.** All but one of the respondents described their programs as customized for full-time working professionals, who are mostly classroom teachers; this can create competing commitments between teachers' professional responsibilities and their pursuit of administrator licensure.
- **Assessment concerns.** Many respondents expressed that the CalAPA's cycles represent an overwhelming set of expectations

and a very steep learning curve for candidates. In addition, some requirements of the assessment could create tension for the candidates with colleagues and supervisors.

### The Role of State Agencies in Policy Implementation

- **Compliance and technical assistance.** The CTC's regulatory and disciplinary functions might inhibit preparation program leaders from revealing significant issues they have in implementing new policies such as the CalAPA.
- **Organizational capacity.** Respondents recognized that CTC staff have been responsive to the field and have prioritized direct support for preliminary preparation programs to the best of their organizational capacity. However, more and varied support is needed as the CalAPA, and other policy changes, roll out.

### Concerns About Increased Accountability

- **Use of accountability measure.** Respondents assumed that programs will be compared against each other and that CalAPA results will be used as a high-stakes accountability measure by the CTC, employers, and potential applicants to their programs.
- **Narrowing of scope.** Program leaders reported concerns that they would need to design preparation programs overly focused on the CalAPA's expectations in order to ensure that candidates would be able to successfully complete the assessment.

### Potential Challenges to the Ongoing Viability of Programs

- A program's finances could be thrown off if its enrollment numbers decline because its candidates cannot pass the CalAPA, or because candidates choose another program with a better pass rate or pursue a different preliminary credential pathway.

### Considerations for Next Steps

Based on the study's findings and the Issues for Further Discussion section, the report offers the following short-term and longer-term actions for consideration:

#### Short-Term Considerations

- Continue to provide administrator preparation programs with clear and timely communications in various forms about policy requirements, timelines, changes, and emerging practices related to the CalAPA.
- Address initial questions and concerns about the assessment design.
- Increase efforts to educate K-12 schools and district leadership about the expectations of the assessment.
- Collaborate with K-12 schools and district leadership to develop local options for meeting the demands of other aspects of the CalAPA policy.
- Initiate more substantive and collaborative support that assists programs in providing a variety of help to candidates to successfully complete the preparation and assessment process for the preliminary administrator credential.

- Clarify the parameters of the agency's leadership capacity in convening and sustaining preliminary program networks, and support program leaders in forming ad hoc cohorts or encouraging others — professional organizations, foundations, or fee-for-service providers — to sponsor them.

#### Longer-Term Considerations

- Resolve potential policy conflicts between the CalAPA and the California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination exam pathways.
- Form a collaboration of agencies, institutions, and stakeholders to advocate for funding and resources to strengthen the field of education leader preparation that now includes the CalAPA.
- Invest in a broader and more robust research agenda to inform the ongoing implementation of the CalAPA policy.
- Determine how much funding to allocate to support research in the field of leadership preparation during this period of intense policy revision and implementation.

Overall, the study's findings can be used by administrator preparation programs, policymakers, and the education field at large to inform possible refinements to the CalAPA policy; inform ways that preparation programs integrate and implement the CalAPA; and help determine how best to support administrator candidates through the preparation and assessment process.



## Description of the Study

### Background

For the past six years, California has been reviewing, revising, and strengthening its preparation and certification system for school and district administrators. This work included the state updating its policy for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC), resulting in updated program and professional standards, along with new content and performance expectations for candidates.

As of summer 2018, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) approved 65 preliminary preparation programs, using the updated program standards. Policy changes also led to the development of the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA), the first required performance assessment for preliminary administrator certification. The CalAPA was piloted in 25 administrator preparation programs in 2017–18, field tested in 25 programs in 2018–19, and is scheduled to be fully implemented in 2019–20.

With the authorization of the CalAPA policy,<sup>1</sup> program leaders, instructors, field

supervisors, and coaches in California's administrator preparation programs began revamping various aspects of their programs to prepare and support candidates to pass the CalAPA and meet the newly established expectations to earn the PASC.<sup>2</sup> Even before the first consequential administration in 2019–20, it appears that the CalAPA policy has and will continue to have significant impact on administrator preparation programs, future candidates, and the field at large. (For more information about the CalAPA, see the text box: *Overview of the California Administrator Performance Assessment*.)

### Purpose

In this study, researchers from the California Comprehensive Center at WestEd, the Principal Leadership Institute at the University of California at Berkeley, and the Regional Educational Laboratory West at WestEd sought to examine the initial impact of the CalAPA policy by identifying early changes (i.e., changes made through March 30, 2018) in administrator preparation programs' practices. This early study is in no way meant to evaluate programs or personnel; no program names are used in this report.

Documenting reactions to a new policy that has not been fully implemented presents

<sup>1</sup> At its September 2013 meeting, the CTC amended the requirements for earning a PASC to include, when developed, passage of an administrator performance assessment (i.e., the CalAPA). In June 2018, the CTC made further amendments to the CalAPA policy.

<sup>2</sup> In California, there are three pathways to the PASC — traditional, intern, and examination. Both the traditional and the intern pathways require a passing score on the CalAPA as part of the program. This study focuses on the traditional pathway, in which candidates must complete a Commission-approved program of specialized and professional preparation in administrative services and, beginning in 2019–20, achieve a passing score on the CalAPA. Successful completion results in the program sponsor formally recommending the candidate for the PASC. (Find additional details about California's PASC requirements in Appendix A.)

a challenge because respondents may have strong initial reactions, which may evolve as they become more familiar with the nuances of the policy. Nonetheless, the findings from this study present a useful snapshot of the current state of preparation programs that are preparing for consequential implementation of the CalAPA policy.

The study's findings can be used in a variety of ways by all those connected with the

work — administrator preparation programs, policymakers, and the education field at large. For instance, information from this study could be used to inform possible refinements to the CalAPA policy; prompt additional systemic supports related to the CalAPA; inform the ways that preparation programs integrate and implement the CalAPA moving forward; and help determine how best to support candidates through the preparation and assessment process for the PASC.

## BOX 1. OVERVIEW OF THE CALIFORNIA ADMINISTRATOR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

In recent years, interest in authentic demonstrations of administrative ability has increased among administrative credentialing programs and education stakeholders. California is one of a small number of states that has taken action to incorporate a capstone performance assessment as a licensure requirement for the state's Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC).

In September 2013, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) revised the program standards and requirements for earning the preliminary credential through the coursework pathway. These requirements included, along with successfully completing an approved program and fieldwork experiences, passing an administrator performance assessment, when developed. In 2016, the CTC, Evaluation Research Systems/Pearson, and a stakeholder Design Team began developing this new required assessment, the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA). The CalAPA is an intensive performance assessment carried out in three cycles over the course of a candidate's preliminary administrator credential program.

**Pilot and field testing.** During the winter and spring of 2017, 25 of the 65 approved administrator preparation programs pilot tested the CalAPA with 300 candidates. Results from these pilot tests informed various refinements to the CalAPA and its scoring rubrics. During the 2017–18 school year, approximately 500 preliminary candidates and 25 program providers participated in a field test of the CalAPA system, informing additional refinements to the preliminary program standards and to the CalAPA policies, assessment process, and rubrics.

**Non-consequential year.** Prompted by comments from the field requesting more time to prepare for full CalAPA implementation, 2018–19 has been designated as a non-consequential year for candidate results. Non-consequential in this context means that candidates who enroll in a PASC preparation program prior to June 1, 2019, will receive a score on the CalAPA. However, they will not be held to meeting the CalAPA passing standard

as a condition for earning a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential as long as the candidate has completed and submitted the CalAPA for scoring and is recommended for the preliminary credential or certificate of eligibility by December 31, 2020.

**Full implementation.** The first year of full implementation of the CalAPA begins in the 2019–20 academic year for all candidates enrolling in a Commission-approved PASC preparation program on or after June 1, 2019. As of this date, candidates who enroll in a PASC program must pass the CalAPA (according to the yet to be finalized and adopted performance standards) as a condition for earning a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential. Starting June 1, 2019, candidates will be charged a total fee of \$425.00 for the assessment.

**Assessment structure and process.** The CalAPA is structured around tasks situated in three leadership cycles that are completed at three different periods during a candidate’s preliminary program. Each task focuses on the roles and responsibilities of today’s education leaders, using an investigate, plan, act, and reflect leadership sequence. Completion of each task requires that candidates either be in a school site–placement or have access to a school site where they can complete the work necessary for the CalAPA. The CalAPA approach provides an educative process that guides candidates to complete a leadership cycle, submit it for scoring, and receive assessment results. These results include a “pass” or “no pass” score, along with analytic feedback about specific Performance Expectations. The CalAPA process allows programs to use assessment results from the first two leadership cycles to inform programs and candidates about the support needed to improve leadership practice.

The assessment comprises the following three leadership cycles focused on school site level work:

- **Cycle 1: Planning School Improvement** — Conducting data-based investigations, and planning and facilitating collaborative data inquiries that support equity and school improvement.
- **Cycle 2: Facilitating Professional Learning** — Facilitating collaborative learning among a small team of teachers to improve student learning.
- **Cycle 3: Supporting Teacher Growth** — Coaching an individual teacher to improve teaching and learning.

Emphasis on multiple modalities for evidence across these three leadership cycles allows candidates to submit evidence in various formats: annotated video, written plans for implementing academic priorities, observation notes and feedback on teaching practice, and narrative responses and reflections about practice. Elements requiring video must be directed, specific, and annotated.

### Sampling

Researchers sent three emails about the CalAPA study to program leads from the 65 PASC preparation programs in California

that were approved by the CTC at the time of the study asking them to complete a demographic survey (see Appendix B for the survey questions). Thirty-four programs answered the request to complete the survey.

Researchers analyzed these demographic survey results to create a purposive sample consisting of a representative mix of the following characteristics:

- Authorized agency type (e.g., institution of higher education, county office of education, nonprofit)
- Program size
- Geographic location
- Depth of participation in the initial CalAPA-related activities

Based upon this analysis, researchers invited 23 representative programs to participate in the study. Of those, 20 programs completed the interview with researchers (see Appendix C for the sample profile).

### Data Collection Process

In March 2018, researchers conducted individual phone interviews with lead staff from sampled administrator preparation programs to discuss the most significant impacts of the CalAPA policy to date. Each interview lasted between approximately 45 to 60 minutes. To assist with qualitative analysis, all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Researchers asked interviewees questions about how the CalAPA policy had changed, or was anticipated to change, various aspects of their program:

- How the CalAPA policy changed the *program structure* of the respondent's preparation program.
- How the CalAPA policy changed the *coursework* of the respondent's preparation program.

- How the CalAPA policy changed the *fieldwork* of the respondent's preparation program.
- What kinds of *resources* the respondent's program had allocated to meet the requirements of the new CalAPA policy.
- What kinds of *support* had helped inform program staff *so far*.
- What kinds of *support* program staff anticipate will be beneficial *in the future*.

(See Appendix D for the full list of interview questions.)

### Data Analysis

Researchers conducted a detailed qualitative analysis of the transcribed interviews. Codes were generated using a combined inductive and deductive approach. Deductively, a set of initial *a priori* codes were created based on the question topics in the structured interview protocol. Multiple researchers used these topics to code and organize the interview transcripts, which led the research team to inductively generate additional codes for themes that emerged in the data from at least three separate interviews. The team of researchers then collaboratively reviewed the coded, organized text and identified and clarified areas of disagreement in the process of crafting summary findings.

## Summary of Findings

The findings of the study are organized in this section by key topics used in the interview protocol: Coursework, Fieldwork, Resources, and Support. Researchers identified themes within these topics and used respondents' own words to describe completed and anticipated changes to program organization and practices.

Results from the 34 programs that completed the initial demographic survey demonstrate that, two years before the first consequential year of the CalAPA, programs are already making changes.

### Coursework

#### Curriculum: Program Content

Respondents indicated that changes have been made to their program's curriculum as a result of the CalAPA (see Figure 2), ranging from minor to major. These changes included making curriculum shifts or additions and ensuring stronger alignment to the tasks in the CalAPA assessment.

Those interviewed described changes in program curriculum as ranging from minor shifts — such as “potentially a little more emphasis on some alignment with CalAPA content, but not new content, just new emphasis” — to major revisions. As one respondent said, “This is going to be an extreme makeover for my program ... especially when the new CalAPA goes into effect.” Seven programs identified specific types of curriculum shifts or additions that were needed because of the new focus on CalAPA — content that is more intentional, more in-depth, and specifically addresses performance expectations by addressing the

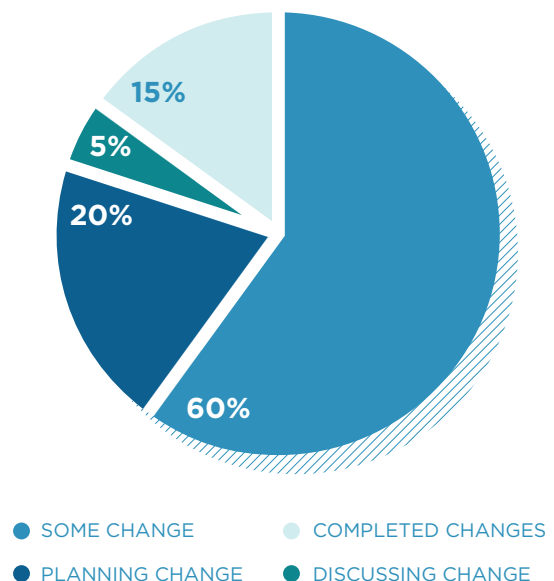
topics and skills called for in the Leadership Cycles. One respondent explained, “Since we've been part of both the pilot and the field testing, we've been trying to integrate as much as we can.... There is a focus, for

*Respondents described a wide range of changes in program curriculum from “a little more emphasis on some alignment” to “extreme makeover.”*

example, in our instructional leadership class on observation in classrooms — now the course is more structured.”

Three programs indicated that focusing explicit attention on terminology used in CalAPA tasks was important in supporting candidates' success “so that when candidates take the CalAPA, they're not

Figure 2. By March 2018, three quarters of respondents reported completing all or some of the changes to their Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Programs in preparation for the administration of the CalAPA



thinking, 'What does that mean?' ... And so that the language is not going to trip them up." Another program identified adding content related to adult learning theory and also research methods for qualitative and quantitative data: "We're going to really have to be more specific and explicit about the research methods that we include in our coursework."

Another respondent explained that Cycle 1 demanded that programs help students get "more data than were available on the website ... to really try to get to a root cause analysis." But because those data are collected in real-life settings, governed by the district and school and not the preparation program, the director concluded that staff needed to work more closely with candidates' districts to develop understanding of new expectations that, in turn, necessitate more complex projects and require candidates have access to much deeper district data. Still another respondent pointed to adding "a coaching series and framework ... and a facilitation series and framework" as a means to fill content gaps in the previous curriculum of the respondent's program.

### Instruction

Along with curriculum content modifications, leaders described necessary instructional considerations as they prepare candidates for the CalAPA. Current and anticipated instructional changes described by respondents were tightly interwoven with performance expectations embedded in the CalAPA.

A program leader explained the need to "look at a different textbook ... or some type of support materials for candidates to be able to do coaching and facilitation, not just talk about it." Program respondents emphasized that changing instructional practices required analyzing CalAPA cycles very closely and knowing "what kind of skills to teach and how best to do that." One respondent noted, "We had talked about it and so forth, but when staff actually taught the class, that's when they realized, 'Oh, I've got to prepare candidates with that skill.'" For other programs, change meant moving away

from "having candidates do research papers" and "reading the book to emphasizing focusing in on that practice." As one respondent summarized, "The instructional strategy is more project-based-driven and a lot of in-class practice."

*"We had talked about it and so forth, but when staff actually taught the class, that's when they realized, 'Oh, I've got to prepare candidates with that skill.'"*

Programs indicated that instructional changes centered on supporting candidates' learning and their ability to demonstrate selected practices called for in the performance assessment. For example, one respondent described the program's instructional shift as follows: "We're looking at our lectures and making sure that we are supporting ... knowing how to build a community of practice ... letting candidates be more problem solvers." Program respondents noted the importance of giving candidates "those real-world problems and working through them ... and then coming up with some proposed solutions." Another program leader reported, "We use all the instructional strategies ... because it is important for candidates to be able to have ... the instructional toolkit to be able

to coach teachers. We actually engage in modeling and really doing research around different techniques.”

To accommodate needed instructional changes, another respondent suggested having “a little bit more time built [into classes] so there’s a sort of modeling of the data analysis, but also more time for [candidates] to do it with some feedback in class before they’re released to do it on their own.” For some program leaders, the shifts that resulted in requiring more instructional time have caused them to rethink the basic structure of their preliminary programs.

### Course-Based Assignments and Formative Assessments

Respondents reported that program assignments and formative feedback were changing in order to better guide and support candidates in passing the CalAPA and meeting the other PASC expectations. These changes include altering the order of assignments, deepening existing tasks, and creating new projects.

Ten program leaders described various alterations to existing performance tasks to better align with the CalAPA and their own program approaches. One program described changing a performance assignment based on the professional learning community cycle (Learning Cycle 2) by “placing it in a different part of the coursework to align better with the assessment process.” Another program now has two separate assignments for the improvement cycle (Leadership Cycle 2) because they aligned to the CalAPA tasks;

the program also kept its own performance assessment because it aligned more closely with its individual program outcomes. Another program respondent stressed the importance of making “adjustments in assignments and identifying which . . . are going to be targeted as signature assignments to collect the right assignment data to meet the state standards.”

Three programs acknowledged that even with current efforts to embed formative assessments into coursework or fieldwork, they know they will need additional changes in the future to fully implement practices that not only meet program expectations, including the CalAPA, but also benchmark students’ incremental progress. Programs were focused on aligning assignments and assessments with CalAPA content, but also on making sure “that students are very

comfortable going into the test . . . being very confident about completing the tasks associated with the assessment.”

Five programs specifically reported redirecting formative assessment activities into fieldwork.

A program respondent explained their shift in practice: “We have decided next year not to do our end-of-year culminating project . . . and totally embed all three assessments within the fieldwork portion of our coursework. We are all rewriting our syllabi and looking at how we can add activities and lectures and topics that support those fieldwork assessments.” Another respondent summarized the program’s candidate assessments within fieldwork as onsite coaching, direct feedback on practice, and shadowing the candidate.

*“We have decided next year not to do our end-of-year culminating project . . . and totally embed all three assessments within the fieldwork portion of our coursework.”*

## Fieldwork

Program approaches to fieldwork components varied but generally centered on fieldwork placements, alignment of fieldwork to the CalAPA policy, and the need for additional professional learning for fieldwork supervisors. In many cases, interviewees described current or anticipated activities that linked fieldwork more tightly to curriculum and instructional practices.

Because preliminary administrator candidates usually enter a program already employed in a district, the programs

have little control over fieldwork placements.

As one program leader acknowledged, “We don’t really place our students, because they just come to us.” Therefore, the CalAPA policy has generated few, if any, changes to

fieldwork placements by programs. Five respondents directly mentioned limitations of their programs’ influence on fieldwork placements, including one who said, “Fieldwork placements will not change. It’s where the student works. That’s where the fieldworks are going to be done. Most of my students, I’d say 90 percent, if not more, are classroom teachers. They will do their field experience at the school where they are employed.” Another explained, “Our candidates are where they are. We don’t get involved in placement because of the district. That’s a district employee issue.”

As they have little control over the fieldwork placements of preliminary candidates, when asked about fieldwork, program leads focused their responses on the alignment of fieldwork to the CalAPA policy and

assessment. While programs understand that they cannot provide students direct support or feedback on the CalAPA itself, eight programs discussed aligning fieldwork assignments with the cycles of the CalAPA so students can be more easily prepared for the time and rigor of the assessment. One program director summarized, “We’ll have applied projects within the fieldwork that help support candidates with understanding how to do the actual assessment.” Another respondent explained the program’s plan as having all of the fieldwork assignments together at the end of the program so

candidates are “able to take that material and convert it into whatever submission they need to do for CTC.” Respondents generally agreed that “compared to the typical field assignments, [CalAPA is] a lot of work. There’s no way around it.”

*“Our candidates are where they are. We don’t get involved in placement because of the district. That’s a district employee issue.”*

The CalAPA, undergirded by newly adopted and deeper performance expectations (the California Administrator Performance Expectations) for preliminary candidates, shifted what fieldwork supervisors needed to know and be able to do to guide and support candidates. Ten respondents indicated that fieldwork supervisor training had either increased or changed as a result of the CalAPA policy. For some programs, this meant more strongly aligning fieldwork and coursework. For example, one leader stated, “Further alignment between fieldwork and what was traditionally thought of as coursework has been significant.” Many of these 10 respondents also discussed the need for increased time to help fieldwork supervisors fully understand the intent and requirements of the CalAPA policy. As one



leader summarized, “We are trying to make sure that the supervisors understand what is required of these candidates, especially since the CalAPA is so new.” Added to this, respondents indicated the need for more time for supervisors to calibrate themselves to the CalAPA rubrics and with each other.

## Resources

### Human Resources

As programs are transitioning to the new CalAPA policy, they reported the need to add staff (both full- and part-time), shift assignments, and create new positions. Programs described varied approaches to funding the additional human resources needed to plan for and implement the CalAPA policy.

Five respondents indicated that the new policy had led to a shift in assignments and duties for some of the program supervisors and staff where “current staff are going to have to take on some of the responsibilities [related] to the CalAPA.” Staff whose positions were originally envisioned as program or assessment coordinators needed to spend time drafting syllabi and rewriting courses to align with the CalAPA. One program indicated that “the people who are doing the work are the same people who were doing work previously, [but] the work has changed and we’ve added to the work.” Five programs reported that implementing courses, fieldwork, and other supports aligned to the CalAPA required hiring additional staff. One such respondent shared, “I think from a staffing perspective

it’s been a significant change.... We have hired additional staff and are looking to hire more.”

A county office provider said that they use two recently retired educators as consultants who are “absolutely essential to us being able to get all the feedback, and then collaboratively look at what we can do to adjust things.... Because of the importance of the CalAPA, we’re using more of their time.” Another respondent indicated thinking about additional staffing to coordinate the increased number of candidates the respondent’s program was expecting; still another was considering bringing on a staff member to coordinate the program’s fieldwork assignments and supervision.

*“Without any additional financial resources ... our faculty have put in considerable time toward thinking about candidate support. ... It’s been a significant amount of time allocated with very little compensation.”*

Another program described the dilemma of hiring adjunct teaching staff in order to give faculty the release time they need to revise the program’s courses. This results in the class getting taught by a part-time instructor from outside the program. Because adjunct faculty time is usually

limited to teaching, the course “gets taught in isolation of the program [planning and coordination] and that’s not what we want to have happen.”

Programs discussed different ways of funding additional faculty and staff needed to plan and implement the CalAPA policy. One California State University respondent said, “It’s interesting — without any additional financial resources ... our faculty have put in considerable time toward thinking about candidate support.... It’s been a significant amount of time allocated with very little compensation.” Two programs reported

that they “had to do an adjustment in actual salary for the workload of full-time faculty” to allow for the significant support required by candidates under the CalAPA policy. Another explained that instructors needed to review textbooks to either check the alignment of current books to new updated curriculum or select new books, thus requiring them “to allocate funding for them to have those meetings.” Two programs said they provided small stipends for staff to help get ready for CalAPA’s video assignments, and two other programs reported “calling on our ed tech people” to help teach skills and “figure out the videos and uploading and stuff like that.” Three other programs indicated that conversations about compensation or salary adjustments were on the horizon. As one of these program respondents said, “Our field staff ... are contemplating whether or not they’re going to need to be compensated more than they presently are” because they have additional work in the field course.

*Just over half of program respondents described technology-related changes or additions prompted by the CalAPA, specifically using technology in courses and using technology for communicating, documenting performance tasks, and tracking candidate progress.*

### Material and Equipment

Respondents’ comments about changes in material and equipment resources due to the implementation of CalAPA policy centered on textbooks and technology.

Three programs focused on the need for new texts due to course changes and CalAPA expectations. One program leader noted, “We’ve changed all of our texts to begin to ensure that the skills and knowledge required for the CalAPA are also presented in our textbooks. In doing so, we had to purchase textbooks for all of our instructors.” Another

program pointed to the need to “develop materials such as handbooks to assist students in remediation so they can succeed in passing the tests.”

Eleven program respondents described technology-related changes or additions prompted by the CalAPA, specifically using technology in courses and using technology for communicating, documenting performance tasks, and tracking candidate progress. Three programs reported purchasing collaboration software to share documents and post videos, as well as purchasing subscriptions for video examples of teaching to practice observation and

feedback skills. Two respondents described technology-based learning management systems that help their programs support candidates in collecting and organizing course and field assignments to share with faculty and field supervisors. For example, one of those respondents said, “We ... put our fieldwork into our learning management system so

that fieldwork supervisors could look at the work that candidates were doing and give them feedback.” Two programs described their plans to use a learning management system as a student-driven repository for candidates to archive and access their work, not only for program and field assignments, but also as a personal reference library for later use in their CalAPA Learning Cycle submissions.

While some of the programs stated that candidates were using their own laptops, notebooks, and smartphones for required

video documentation, one respondent indicated that the program “had to acquire some video cameras” to loan to candidates who did not have their own technology. Another respondent noted the need to revamp the university’s educational technology lab and “dip deeply into our reserves ... to better support open labs and video editing for performance assessments,” at an estimated cost of between \$100,000 to \$150,000.

### Time Allocations

Program respondents all described an increase in time related to implementing the CalAPA, especially staff time to get up to speed on and plan to implement the necessary changes to accommodate the CalAPA policy.

Ten programs reported that more time was needed due to new program administration activities, participation in the CalAPA pilot and/or field test, and planning and professional learning sessions. Five program respondents indicated that increased time was required for program leaders to communicate the new policy, program changes, and development processes to faculty, instructors, field staff, coaches, admissions clerks, and to their institutions, in general. The transition to the CalAPA, as described by one program leader, led to “an increase in my time, related to front-loading it and explaining what it’s about and trying to get everybody on the same page and get everything organized.” Another program leader elaborated, “The biggest takeaway is the allocation of time to do this transition to CalAPA.... I could foresee

this taking at least 30 to 40 hours over the course of the semester, per semester, for me and my staff ... but initially it will be me.”

In addition, the development of the CalAPA has included program staff engagement in the Design Committee and in piloting and field testing the assessment cycles. Several respondents indicated that their engagement in one or more CalAPA design and development activities — participating on the CalAPA Design Committee, working at a pilot site or field test site, or serving as an assessment scorer — helped clarify the CalAPA policy in practice and what changes their program should make to better prepare candidates. The biggest

*“The biggest takeaway is the allocation of time to do this transition to CalAPA ... I could foresee this taking at least 30 to 40 hours over the course of the semester, per semester, for me and my staff ... but initially it will be me.”*

resource shift, according to one respondent, has been “staff allocation between all of my time and the three professors who have been teaching class ... and then two of them have been helping with the field testing.” As one leader summarized, the CalAPA has “added more responsibilities for

administering the program as opposed to teaching and learning.”

Nine program respondents described how program planning and staff professional development generated by expectations in the CalAPA policy led to an increase in work time. One person noted that “there’s been a lot of time spent in the development of what the program is going to look like ... a year of really planning, anticipating, and eventually putting in the structure that we will be implementing in the fall.” One program leader captured the thoughts of several others: “There will be some need for professional development for our full-time

faculty as well as our adjunct faculty on how to implement the CalAPA and how the changes are made.” A respondent reported that the program allocated funding for their instructors to meet, talk about the new texts, and plan together; the program also allocated time to meet as a whole faculty for professional development around some of the requirements within the CalAPA so they are able to support students. Another program emphasized that “it takes time to train these individuals on how to incorporate the CalAPA into the courses because this is not an email training. It needs to be face to face.”

To maximize time and accommodate practitioners serving as instructors, another respondent described using the video-conferencing tool Zoom for learning sessions and updates, and spending “a lot more time with our staff so instructors know what’s going on with the other folks.” A program leader noted, “There’s been some release time allotted for this, but very little. And I think we’re going to have to look at more. I’m anticipating that there’s got to be more resources given to this.”

Clearly a program’s effective implementation of CalAPA policy hinges not only on a deep connection between changes in curriculum content, instructional practices, and fieldwork, but also on its capacity for immediate and ongoing professional learning for program supervisors, instructors, and field coordinators.

## Support

### CTC Informational Activities

Staff from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) offered a variety of activities in the field orienting programs to the new CalAPA assessment and the related PASC expectations. Many respondents attended these activities and found they provided a foundational understanding of the policy and what was required of them.

Nine respondents acknowledged the recent CTC-sponsored workshops and six mentioned the webinars as providing vital basic information and allowing program

*Respondents mentioned CTC-sponsored activities provided basic information and allowed program leads to ask questions and share ongoing work, which helped build common understandings about the CalAPA policy and the assessment’s design.*

leads to ask questions and share ongoing work, which in turn helped build common understandings about the CalAPA policy and the assessment’s design. For example, one program leader appreciated the opportunity to “go through the rubrics with our whole (program) team and really think about, with each section of the rubric,

where we align and where we might need to make changes. That was really helpful.” Four respondents also specifically recognized the value of sharing program materials, with San Diego State highlighted as a key exemplar program that offered its syllabi as a reference for others. “Not that you would replicate theirs,” one of these program leaders emphasized, “but it made me excited that there is a process that one could go through to think about that sort of alignment, and some of the instructional through lines.” Multiple respondents referenced other

helpful information sources. Three of those interviewed recognized the value of being a part of the CTC Design Committee, and three commented about participating in office hours hosted by CTC.

### Increased CTC Communication and Consultation

While programs recognized helpful early support, the desire for increased and timely communications from CTC about policy was also a theme among respondents. In addition, leaders sought individual consultation with CTC staff for more specific feedback and ideas about their programs' approach to these complex changes.

*“When it comes to physically recreating and redesigning your program so that it complies with CalAPA, we need to have more physical, specific (hands-on) training ... focused specifically on our individual institutions.”*

Given the level of effort involved with implementing the CalAPA, three program leaders emphasized the importance of transparent timelines and clear, consistent communication around the assessment so that programs know up front what is going to be expected of them, as well as what is going to be provided as support. Another three leaders wanted more timely access to the CalAPA field test results, as a way to “see the areas of strength and the areas of growth for the cohort ... to be a little bit more mindful and intentional” in their programming as a result. Another leader recommended more statewide communication to K-12 educators to let prospective administrators, and the district leaders who employ them, know about the CalAPA and its new expectations.

Four preparation program leaders also maintained that the substantive planning and administrative changes involved with the shift

to the CalAPA taxed on-site staff capacity. They therefore highlighted the need for more individualized and timely direct consultation for programs. As one respondent explained, “When it comes to physically recreating and redesigning your program so that it complies with CalAPA, we need to have more physical, specific (hands-on) training.... It needs to be focused specifically on our individual institutions, because mine is going to be different from any other institution.” Another

respondent suggested, “It would be nice to have someone assigned to campus that we could just bounce ideas off and talk with [about] the reasonableness of certain changes and if it passes muster, for all kinds of things.”

### Collaboration Across Programs

While interview respondents acknowledged the value of the CalAPA-related information provided by CTC to date, many also cited a need for additional practical support in order to move beyond policy and regulation toward implementation and on-the-ground problem solving. Many asked for opportunities to connect with colleagues across programs as they make changes and implement new approaches.

One program leader said, “To just say, ‘Here is the policy language, but you have wiggle room to figure it out,’ that doesn’t help me problem solve.... It would be much more helpful to have small sessions with programs dealing with similar issues.” As a means for this, 10 respondents suggested creating peer networks where similar programs or institutions in the same region can share knowledge about their ongoing efforts

around CalAPA. One respondent captured what others described: “A lot of us are trying to do this on our own, you know, tapping into our own informal networks. It would be nice [to have] an opportunity to sit and think about what you’re doing with your colleagues.... Maybe a formal meeting that fosters informal discussion: ‘What are you each doing? What are you each puzzled about? What do you do about this? What are we learning in this area? What are the obstacles?’ But not anything where we feel like we’re there to learn how to comply, but we’re there to learn from each other on how to build our programs.” Another program leader agreed, saying, “I think regional meetings as we roll this out for a year would be really helpful.... I don’t know how to structure that. Maybe we’d have to pay for it ourselves, but I would have paid to come.... You’re face-to-face, you’re talking with other people who are doing the same thing.” While a peer network was a popular suggestion for supporting CalAPA-aligned program changes, program leaders also indicated that organizing and initiating peer networks is challenged by finding resources to do so.

*Half of respondents suggested creating peer networks where similar programs or institutions in the same region can share knowledge about their ongoing efforts around CalAPA.*

## Issues for Further Discussion

California administrator preparation programs have undergone six years of significant change, and the crescendo into the consequential implementation of the CalAPA has yet to come. Changes generated by the adoption of the CalAPA

policy already have had early effects on candidate and program standards, staffing, curriculum and instruction, and resource allocation. The broadened role of programs is an additional shift as faculty and staff become intermediaries who must navigate the competing needs of candidates, programs, institutions, and employers, while simultaneously striving to master the complexity of implementing the CalAPA policy.

To be expected, many program leaders see the changes as dramatic shifts and have surfaced concerns and tensions.

Despite these reactions, several leaders still viewed the assessment as a potential positive catalyst for collective staff understanding of the preliminary program and more effective candidate preparation.

The findings in this study can perhaps be better understood when viewed in the context of other systemwide education issues. The findings also add useful specific details to the broader context that give practitioners a better grasp of how the CalAPA is impacting and interacting with education issues that sometimes feel theoretical. Accordingly, this section provides some related commentary about key issues in the field of education to consider, as they could affect administrator preparation programs and CalAPA implementation. Based on insights from program interviews, this section specifically explores questions about the assessment, constraints to administrator preparation programs, the role of state agencies in implementing policy changes, concerns about increased accountability, and the potential challenges to preliminary program viability.

### Questions About the Assessment

While the respondents understood that the CalAPA is new and still emerging, several voiced specific questions and suggestions for possible future revisions, and wondered how input might be addressed.

**Feedback process.** Many leaders wondered about the feedback process both for the cohort and individual administrator candidates. Respondents expressed that having general information about the results of the field test would help them better prepare candidates for the CalAPA. As one leader stated, “I want to be able to see where the areas of strength and the areas of growth for the cohort are so that I could take that data and be a little bit more mindful and intentional in how I ensure that I’m covering all of those standards and exposing [candidates] to [relevant] experiences.” In addition, leaders expressed an interest in candidates receiving formative and timely feedback on their own CalAPA results and wondered how remediation will be handled for students who do not pass the CalAPA.

**Scope.** Leaders also expressed concern about the scope of the CalAPA. At least three respondents worried that the CalAPA is more like a summative assessment for experienced administrators than a preliminary assessment for candidates at the start of their administrative careers. One leader respondent voiced concern that candidates are having to demonstrate mastery of skills at the same time that they are learning those competencies in the program. As one leader said, “I am just

hopeful that whoever is scoring these exams keeps in the back of their mind, these are novice administrators. They are not expert. They haven’t even assumed an administrative position.” As one leader cautioned, “I worry that CalAPA is so complicated that we miss the essence of what we’re trying to do. It feels like the focus is so much on the

how, that I worry I’ve lost the why, and that why (purpose) has got to be driving the how (procedure), and I’m not certain it is.”

*“I worry that CalAPA is so complicated that we miss the essence of what we’re trying to do. It feels like the focus is so much on the how, that I worry I’ve lost the why.”*

**Leadership cycles.** Six respondents expressed specific concerns about

the CalAPA leadership cycles. Among this group, two leaders suggested that cycles 1 and 2 could be merged or run concurrently, as to them data analysis (cycle 1) represents the natural focus for any professional learning community (cycle 2). Another leader felt that cycle 1 was “repetitive” and “hard for students to follow,” while a different leader suggested that cycle 2 be eliminated because it isn’t “nearly as important as cycles 1 and 3.” Other recommendations included adding an emphasis on administrative operations to the CalAPA, as well as allowing additional task flexibility (particularly in cycle 1) in order to afford better alignment with the district frameworks or priorities in place locally. “If there was just a little bit of flexibility,” one leader maintained, “we could make it a more powerful task, a more meaningful task.”

## Constraints to Administrator Preparation Programs

### Program-Level Constraints

Program context — such as the need to respond quickly to broad-scale policy changes, determine appropriate staffing structures, deal with limited professional opportunities for program faculty and staff, or address lack of funding for research on education leadership — may be fueling program concerns as the deadline for full policy implementation draws near.

**Series of changes.** Respondents indicated that implementing the CalAPA policy required significant changes in practice, which followed quickly on a series of other comprehensive revisions to the new statewide PASC system. Additionally, to prepare for full implementation of the CalAPA, programs needed to initiate early changes, while details about the CalAPA were still being field tested and finalized. Three program leaders voiced questions related to remediation, not yet knowing specifics, but hoping that the state will help provide support options for candidates who do not pass the CalAPA. Two respondents also noted that the changes generated by the CalAPA policy followed closely on the institutionalization of the recently adopted California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPE), which inspired their own round of changes for many preparation programs.

**Staffing structures.** Respondents indicated that their administrator preparation programs were constrained by having limited full-time faculty and being reliant on adjunct

instructors and staff. Respondents described their part-time instructors as active educators who have demanding full-time positions as principals, district office leaders, and superintendents. While this staffing model may fulfill a program's teaching needs and ensure strong connections to the field, it most often limits the capacity of faculty to be substantively involved with the program in other areas such as governance, research, or program improvement. The inability to support full-time, dedicated staff also leads to significant limitations related to professional development, collaborative planning time, and curriculum revision. Program directors often teach courses and serve as the singular designee for program

administration and redesign responsibilities. They are, therefore, overburdened even before factoring in the time and effort needed to navigate CalAPA's significant changes and policy shifts.

One respondent described the difficulty of managing these competing demands: "I'm getting whiplash with all these changes and adjustments. Don't get me wrong. I enjoy all of this. It's just overwhelming."

### Limited professional opportunities.

Preliminary preparation programs also operate in an underresourced professional culture. In a state that has over 60 preliminary preparation programs located in institutions of higher education, county offices of education, local school districts, charter management organizations, and nonprofit organizations, there are only a few professional networking and support options that specifically target preparation programs and staff. For example, the California Association of Professors of Educational

*"I'm getting whiplash with all these changes and adjustments. Don't get me wrong. I enjoy all of this. It's just overwhelming."*



Administration is the only California-focused professional organization for *professors* who teach in preparation programs and related doctoral programs. Several other organizations, such as the Association of California School Administrators and the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association focus on multiple areas within the California education landscape, including leadership preparation.

**Lack of research funding.** The ability of the education field to prioritize a robust research agenda to study and guide administrator preparation is constrained by limited leadership development funds. For example, while the University of California (UC) system is intended to be a leader in research, it has only two administrator preparation programs – the Principal Leadership Institute at UC Berkeley and at UCLA. Neither campus has a research center focused on school leadership or leadership preparation. Other professional and research connections related to administrator preparation and development are offered by WestEd’s federally funded Regional Educational Laboratory West and California Comprehensive Center; foundations such as the Wallace Foundation, which invests in administrator research; and other entities such as the Learning Policy Institute. National organizations such as the American Educational Research Association, the University Council for Educational Administration, and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration are organizations that offer their members up-to-date information on issues related to administrator preparation and, sometimes, opportunities or support for related research. However, only a small percentage of individual preparation program staff are members of these organizations, and running programs with only limited full-time staff

disqualifies the programs from institutional memberships. Most of these groups include California interests, but within a broader multistate or national landscape.

### Candidate-Level Constraints

Nineteen out of 20 respondents described their programs as customized for full-time working professionals, who are mostly classroom teachers. While this may be laudable, the customization may present challenges. For example, in university systems, by offering classes on weeknights, weekends, and summers, programs are frequently considered “alternative” and may sometimes be marginalized in their respective institutions, thus restricting access to institutional resources and candidate support. Also, candidates have competing commitments between their job’s professional responsibilities and their pursuit of administrator licensure. They typically do not receive financial support, through employers or their programs, to pause their employment while engaged in their administrator preparation program. Educating working professionals also necessitates that fieldwork placements be conveniently located at the candidate’s work location. While proximal placement may have some convenience for the candidate, the candidate’s site may not offer the targeted developmental or professional opportunities needed for the successful completion of the CalAPA and preliminary credential.

The assessment itself raised various candidate-related concerns expressed by program leaders. Many respondents expressed that the CalAPA’s cycles represent an overwhelming set of expectations and a very steep learning curve for programs and students who are generally working at least part time. “I could see this year, as we were

working with the candidates, it's a major challenge for them to do what's required in the [CalAPA]," one leader explained. Another pointed out that some of the requirements of the performance assessment "also impact their relationships with their colleagues at work, as well as, sometimes, their administrators. So it has a major impact all the way around." For example, existing school and district labor agreements might not support a candidate who is a non-credentialed administrator observing a teacher and providing feedback, or a supervising principal might feel unwelcome pressure to select the candidate over another teacher to lead a new work group to accommodate the timeline required for CalAPA completion.

**"[The CalAPA requirements] also impact their relationships with [candidates'] colleagues at work, as well as, sometimes, their administrators. So it has a major impact all the way around."**

### The Role of State Agencies in Policy Implementation

The CTC is an agency in the executive branch of the California state government, serving as a standards board for educator preparation for the public schools of California. It is also the official accrediting body charged with overseeing all of the licensing and credentialing of professional educators in the state. As with other state agencies, the CTC's regulatory and disciplinary functions might inhibit its stakeholders — preparation program leaders — from revealing significant issues they have in implementing new

policies, such as the CalAPA. While CTC staff may wish to facilitate open dialogue about program challenges and uncertainties in knowing how to address them, program staff may feel some risk in being fully transparent.

Respondents recognized that CTC staff have been responsive to the field and have prioritized direct support for preliminary preparation programs to the best of their organizational capacity. However, more and varied support is needed as the CalAPA, and other policy

changes, roll out and are integrated into the approved programs. Respondents echoed what the research says about best practices in organizational and adult learning: deep and ongoing implementation support is needed to implement changes in policy and practice that result in targeted improvement.<sup>3</sup> Program leaders and researchers also identified the need to develop networked learning communities that bring institutions together to "understand the true nature of a problem, and advance local support structures for improvement" (p. 2).<sup>4</sup>

### Concerns About Increased Accountability

Given that the CalAPA is the first statewide performance assessment required for every preliminary program candidate, most of the respondents in this study described feeling

<sup>3</sup> Bryk, A., Gomez, L., & Grunow, A. (2011). *Getting ideas into action: building networked improvement communities in education*. Stanford, CA: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

<sup>4</sup> Englebart, D. C. (2003). *Improving our ability to improve: A call for investment in a new future*. IBM Co-Evolution Symposium.

increased pressure to ensure that candidates from their programs pass the CalAPA and increased pressure to meet performance expectations required for the preliminary credential. They assumed that programs will be compared against each other and the CalAPA results will be used as a high-stakes accountability measure by the CTC, employers, and potential applicants to their programs. One respondent described it in this way: “I truly believe that one of the things that we have to be aware of is that the CalAPA has to guide our program because we want people to have some assurance that we can support them in being successful in taking the APA. If our programs are not successful with our participants in passing the APA, it’s going to bring in the question a little bit of our validity and our capability to be a program.”

In addition, several respondents in this study reported concerns that they would need to design preparation programs overly focused on the expectations included in the CalAPA in order to ensure that candidates would be able to successfully complete the assessment. Examples included needing to align instruction and curriculum to the assessment language and expectations, place an increased emphasis on content assessed by the CalAPA, and eliminate other important but non-assessed topics. Some respondents described concerns regarding this narrowing of the curriculum in order to ensure success on the CalAPA. For example, one respondent explained, “The CalAPA seems to focus most on the technical versus theoretical. And those distinctions for me are really important. We want to promote leaders who will not just maintain the system we have and know how to operate within

that, but who can really question.... If you look at the rubric and the questions, they’re all about the how. The CalAPA overlooks the whys and the whats.” Another respondent simply stated, “I can’t make the program just a CalAPA study.”

*“I can’t make the program just a CalAPA study.”*

While it is possible that the pressure to perform, concerns about program comparisons, and the impulse to teach to the

CalAPA may subside over time, these issues are very present and alive in programs’ current reality as they navigate the process of understanding and adapting to new expectations and demands.

### Potential Challenges to the Ongoing Viability of Programs

The implementation of the CalAPA policy raises a variety of potential financial and structural questions and challenges for program directors. With few exceptions, administrator preparation programs function in an environment that requires them to attract sufficient candidate enrollment and the related tuition or fees. Therefore, a program’s finances could be thrown out of balance or worse if the program’s numbers decline because its candidates cannot pass the CalAPA, or because the candidates choose another program with a better pass rate or pursue another pathway option for preliminary credentialing that seems easier or requires less of a financial investment. Several questions regarding financial implications include: *What will happen to the program if the students don’t pass the CalAPA? What expenses will be incurred for a remediation plan? What will happen when all programs can be compared by pass rate? How will*

*the exam route to the credential impact my program once the CalAPA is consequential? Can my program meet student needs and employer hiring needs?*

Structural variation may also impact program viability. Currently, administrator preparation programs in California are housed in four different types of organizations: private universities, universities within California's two state university systems, county offices of education, and nonprofit organizations. The programs in these organizations have wide variance in staffing patterns, program length, and degree conferral. In addition, each organization has different admissions policies and program delivery methods. This variation ultimately has an impact on how programs are able to address the requirements of the CalAPA. Accordingly, as programs grapple with implementation of the CalAPA, some system questions will likely be addressed, such as: How will programs balance issues of cost, time, and successful completion of the CalAPA? Are some organization types more able to flexibly respond to the implications of the CalAPA policy? With the likelihood of increased costs for candidates and/or programs, will enrollments shift among the four types of organizations?

***“There’s no incentive for them to go through the course of study and the learning if they can just more quickly take and pass an exam and get the same professional certification.”***

Respondents repeatedly identified another potential issue they will be facing: the fact that prospective administrators can choose to take the California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination (CPACE), the exam-only pathway, to attain their preliminary credential. Given that CalAPA implementation is still in the early phase, it is difficult to predict how many candidates will opt to take the CPACE.

However, if employers choose to hire a growing number of administrators who have forgone preliminary programs because of the availability of CPACE, program-provided administrator preparation could diminish significantly due to low enrollment.

As one respondent noted, “Once [CalAPA] becomes consequential ... many candidates are going to say, ‘No, maybe I’ll just study for that CPACE, even though I know that the pass rate isn’t very high.’ They’ll take their chances on doing that, and will forgo any of the preparation programs in institutions and county offices.” Another respondent concluded, “There’s no incentive for them to go through the course of study and the learning if they can just more quickly take and pass an exam and get the same professional certification. And now we basically have taken the exam and embedded it in the one-year program by adding the CalAPA.”

## Considerations for Next Steps

Based on the study's findings, and the systemic challenges explored in the Issues for Further Discussion section, there are several short-term and longer-term actions that the CTC, along with policymakers, other state-level agencies, and educators in the field may want to consider carrying out.

### Short-Term Considerations

- Continue to provide administrator preparation programs with clear and timely communications in various forms about policy requirements, timelines, changes, and emerging practices related to the CalAPA.
- Address initial questions and concerns about the assessment design.
- Increase efforts to educate K-12 schools and district leadership about the expectations of the assessment.
- Collaborate with K-12 schools and district leadership to develop local options for meeting the demands of other aspects of the CalAPA policy.
- Initiate more substantive and collaborative support that assists programs in providing a variety of help to candidates to successfully complete the preparation and assessment process for the preliminary administrator credential.
- Clarify the parameters of the agency's leadership capacity in convening and sustaining preliminary program networks and support program

leaders in forming ad hoc cohorts or encouraging others — professional organizations, foundations, or fee-for-service providers — to sponsor them.

### Longer-Term Considerations

- Resolve potential policy conflicts between the CalAPA and the CPACE exam pathways.
- Form a collaboration of agencies, institutions, and stakeholders to advocate for funding and resources to strengthen the field of education leader preparation that now includes the CalAPA.
- Invest in a broader and more robust research agenda to inform the ongoing implementation of the CalAPA policy.
- Determine how much funding to allocate to support research in the field of leadership preparation during this period of intense policy revision and implementation.

### Potential Areas for Further Study

Key questions to explore in a longitudinal study of the impact of the CalAPA policy and assessment could include:

- How do preparation programs continue to respond to the CalAPA policy with further implementation?
- How does the field perceive the value of the CalAPA policy?
- What effect has the CalAPA policy had on the numbers of candidates enrolled in the preparation program routes and the exam route?

- How does the CalAPA policy impact programs' understanding and use of performance assessment over time?
- How does the CalAPA policy intersect with other new administrative credentialing policy components (e.g., induction)?

Additional specific studies can also be conducted to continue investigating the different dimensions of change that were surveyed in this early descriptive study. Potential research questions for these studies include:

- How does the CalAPA policy impact preparation program structures and design?
- How does the CalAPA policy impact the curriculum and instruction of preparation programs?
- What do school and district employers report about the job-readiness level of program candidates who have passed the CalAPA as a part of licensure?
- How do the programs allocate resources to fulfill the CalAPA policy requirements over time?
- What types of effective program supports are developed to support full CalAPA policy implementation? How are they organized? Who do they help?
- How do the preparation programs' approach to or understanding of the CalAPA policy shift over time?
- How do programs cope with the large number of changes in the field?

## Conclusion

This study illustrates that the CalAPA policy is compelling wide-scale change in preliminary administrator preparation programs across California, even before the assessment is finalized and consequential for candidate licensure. Capturing early effects of a policy is difficult, as implementation activities are only just beginning and programs' reactions to the policy are evolving as the policy itself evolves. In addition to the expected prioritization of attention on new expectations and corresponding shifts in practice, revisions to the CalAPA are occurring simultaneously with planning and start up.

In addition, several policy details, such as the set point for passing scores or types of support for remediation, are not yet fully determined or approved by the Commission.

Though preliminary program leaders still have unanswered questions about the details of the policy, how the CalAPA process will work when fully designed, and other related concerns, several of those interviewed acknowledged that changes required in the planning and implementation of the CalAPA have already shown value for staff and candidates. As one leader expressed, "I just think it's a good opportunity for our program. We have had a lot of turnover faculty-wise over the last seven or eight years, and I think this is ... causing our faculty to have a better common understanding of

our program. So in that sense, I think it's a positive."

The new policy aims to improve the preparation of preliminary candidates so, once eligible, they are ready to step into administrative positions. One respondent described, "After our students finished a section of the CalAPA in their fieldwork and

in their coursework, they found it really helpful. They learned a lot from some of the cycles, and one of them was the coaching cycle. Although it was really difficult for them to implement, they really appreciated it. They learned a lot from it."

Another program leader said, "Personally, I think CalAPA is all good stuff, and I think it's going to make our candidates better administrators."

Conversations among educators and policymakers need to continue and expand so that programs can learn from each other and mature their approaches in providing high-quality programs for the range of diverse candidates seeking a license to lead California's schools and districts. Along with carrying out a focused and funded research agenda to inform preliminary preparation for administrators, ongoing attention to the effects of the CalAPA will help the field understand whether and how California's first required administrator performance assessment is, in fact, strengthening the readiness of early administrators to lead schools and districts to improve education for *all* students.

*"I just think it's a good opportunity for our program. We have had a lot of turnover faculty-wise over the last seven or eight years, and I think this is ... causing our faculty to have a better common understanding of our program. So in that sense, I think it's a positive."*

## Appendix A. Requirements for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential

California has a two-tier credential structure. A five-year Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) is the first credential issued after an individual meets basic credential requirements. A clear credential is issued when all credential requirements have been completed.

For the five-year PASC for individuals prepared in California, individuals must satisfy all the following requirements:

1. Possess a valid prerequisite credential
2. Complete one of the following:
  - a. A Commission-approved program of specialized and professional preparation in administrative services and, beginning in 2019–20, a passing score on the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA), resulting in the formal recommendation of the program sponsor
  - b. A one-year Commission-approved administrative services intern program consisting of supervised in-service training resulting in the formal recommendation by the California college or university where the program was completed, which beginning in 2019–20 will also require a passing score on the CalAPA
  - c. Achieve a passing score on the California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination (CPACE), July 2015 revised version, administered by Evaluation Systems, Pearson
3. Satisfy the basic skills requirement
4. Complete five years of full-time experience
5. Verify employment in an administrative position. (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017)

Source: California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. (2017). *Administrative Services Credential for Individuals Prepared in California*. Sacramento, CA: Author. [https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/leaflets/cl574c.pdf?sfvrsn=8aa3c37f\\_8](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/leaflets/cl574c.pdf?sfvrsn=8aa3c37f_8)



## Appendix B. Demographic Survey Questions

These questions served to inform the selection of participants sampled for this study.

**1. Select the type of agency:**

- IHE
- County Office
- Non-Profit
- District
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Mark the preliminary ASC credentials offered by your program:**

- Intern ASC
- Preliminary ASC
- Intern and Preliminary ASC

**3. What is the average enrollment in your program during a calendar year:**

- Fewer than 25
- 25-50
- 51-100
- Over 100 per year

**4. Which best describes the type of area(s) your program primarily serves (select all that apply):**

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

**5. Which geographical region does your program primarily serve (select all that apply):**

- North Coast*, including Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, and Sonoma counties
- Northeastern*, including Siskiyou, Modoc, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Glenn, and Butte counties
- Capital*, including Colusa, Yuba, Sierra, Sutter, Nevada, Placer, Yolo, El Dorado, Sacramento, and Alpine counties

- Bay Area*, including Marin, Napa, Solano, San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Mateo counties
- South Bay*, including Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties
- Delta Sierra*, including San Joaquin, Amador, Calaveras, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne counties
- Central Valley*, including Fresno, Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Kings, and Tulare counties
- Costa Del Sur*, including San Luis Obispo, Kern, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties
- RIMS*, including Mono, Inyo, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties
- Los Angeles*
- Southern*, including Orange, San Diego, and Imperial counties
- Statewide*

6. Mark your participation in the CTC-sponsored activities to date (select all that apply):

- CalAPA Pilot Test site
- CalAPA Pilot Test scorer
- CalAPA Field Test site
- CalAPA Field Test scorer
- CalAPA Design Team member
- CalAPA workshop (any- Madera, San Diego, Santa Clarita)

7. Is your program:

- Mostly in-person
- Mostly online
- Hybrid of in-person and online

8. Rate your program's status in implementing the new CalAPA policy:

- Completed implementation of all changes
- Implemented some changes or in the process of implementing changes
- Planning some changes
- Initiated discussions about potential changes
- No discussions so far

## Appendix C. Study Sample Characteristics

The following figure describes characteristics of the 20 programs that participated in this CalAPA study.

### Number of participating administrator preparation programs

- 20

### Type of agency in which program is housed

- 5 county offices of education
- 8 California State University campuses
- 4 private universities
- 1 University of California campus
- 2 other types of agencies

### Type of credential offered

- 10 programs offered intern and preliminary
- 10 programs offered preliminary only

### Number of candidates in program

- 4 programs have less than 25
- 6 programs have 25–50
- 5 programs have 51–100
- 5 programs have greater than 100

### Method of delivering instruction and support to candidates

- 11 mostly in-person
- 3 mostly online
- 6 hybrid of in-person and online

### Type of area in which program is located

- 6 urban
- 4 suburban
- 1 rural
- 3 urban/suburban
- 6 urban/suburban/rural

### Geographic region of California in which program is located\*

- 1 North Coast
- 2 Northeastern
- 1 Capital
- 4 Bay Area
- 1 South Bay
- 1 Delta Sierra
- 2 Central Valley
- 3 Costa Del Sur
- 3 RIMs
- 3 Los Angeles
- 3 Southern
- 3 Statewide

### Participation in statewide CalAPA activities\*\*

- 11 programs served as CalAPA pilot test sites
- 6 programs had staff serving as CalAPA pilot test scorers
- 13 programs served as CalAPA field test sites
- 4 programs had staff serving as CalAPA design team members
- 18 programs had staff who attended CalAPA workshops

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### Amount of changes programs implemented to align with CalAPA policy

- 3 programs completed implementation of all changes
- 12 programs implemented some changes or were in the process of implementing changes
- 4 programs were planning some changes
- 1 program initiated discussions about potential changes

\* Some programs serve more than one geographic area, so total is more than total number in the sample.

\*\* Many programs participated in multiple activities, so total is more than total number in the sample.

Note: Geographic regions are based on the following California County Superintendents Educational Services Association regions (<http://ccsesa.org/members/region-map/>):

- **North Coast:** Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, and Sonoma counties
- **Northeastern:** Siskiyou, Modoc, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Glenn, and Butte counties
- **Capital:** Colusa, Yuba, Sierra, Sutter, Nevada, Placer, Yolo, El Dorado, Sacramento, and Alpine counties
- **Bay Area:** Marin, Napa, Solano, San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Mateo counties
- **South Bay:** Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties
- **Delta Sierra:** San Joaquin, Amador, Calaveras, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne counties
- **Central Valley:** Fresno, Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Kings, and Tulare counties
- **Costa Del Sur:** San Luis Obispo, Kern, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties
- **RIMS:** Mono, Inyo, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties
- **Los Angeles**
- **Southern:** Orange, San Diego, and Imperial counties
- **Statewide**

## Appendix D. Phone Interview Protocol

(The following interview protocol was used to conduct interviews with the study's participants in March 2018.)

In this study, researchers from the California Comprehensive Center at WestEd and the University of California at Berkeley seek to identify the initial impact of the CalAPA policy on preparation programs, as well as potential future implications to inform the ongoing policy implementation. I want to be explicit that this study is about CalAPA *policy*, that is any of the potential implications of the first required performance assessment for administrator licensure in California, not exclusively the assessment itself. With a better understanding of the early and potential program changes as a result of the CalAPA policy, all those connected to this work can determine how best to support candidates through this process.

While the final report will be shared with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, this report is not sponsored by the CTC nor will data be shared with the CTC.

***Strict confidentiality will be maintained with this report. Interview data will be analyzed for cross-cutting patterns and themes rather than analyzed separately. No program names will be used in the publication. This study is in no way meant to evaluate programs or personnel. Rather it is intended to inform the ongoing implementation of the policy so that all those connected to this work can determine how best to support candidates through this process.***

To assist in analysis, all interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Do you consent to be interviewed about the Initial Impact of the CalAPA Policy? Do you give permission to audio record and take notes during the interview so that we can accurately record the information you provide given that it will be used for transcription purposes only?

When the research is completed, we may save the recordings and notes for use in future research done by myself or others. We will retain these records for up to five years after the study is over.

Do you have any questions or comments before we begin?

As you saw from the overview of the questions I sent, we will be asking you about 4 main areas of potential changes to your program — structure, coursework, fieldwork, and resources. We will conclude with some questions about support. For each of the 4 main sections, I will be asking you about **current** and **anticipated** changes. Each of these sections will have both open-ended and multiple-choice questions where I will ask you to rate the level of change that has happened so far with your program. The choices will be:

- 0 = No change
- 1 = Little change
- 2 = Moderate change
- 3 = Significant change
- 4 = Extreme change

## I. Program Structure

1. We are interested in understanding how the CalAPA policy is changing the program structure of your preparation program. We will begin by discussing *current changes* and then conclude with a question about *anticipated changes*.
  - a. Have you *already* made changes in the area of program structure? If so, please describe one or two examples.
  - b. To what degree has staff *already* made changes to the program structure (e.g., delivery method, length, or composition of the programs)?
    - i) Please rate the level of change:
      - 0 = No change
      - 1 = Little change
      - 2 = Moderate change
      - 3 = Significant change
      - 4 = Extreme change
    - c. To what degree has staffing structure *already* been affected?
      - i) Please rate the level of change:
        - 0 = No change
        - 1 = Little change
        - 2 = Moderate change
        - 3 = Significant change
        - 4 = Extreme change
      - d. To what degree have hiring practices *already* been affected?
        - i) Please rate the level of change:
          - 0 = No change
          - 1 = Little change
          - 2 = Moderate change
          - 3 = Significant change
          - 4 = Extreme change
        - e. Are there any *anticipated* changes to program structure as a result of the policy? Please describe.

## II. Coursework

2. We are interested in understanding how the CalAPA policy is changing the coursework of your preparation program. We will begin by discussing *current changes* and then conclude with a question about *anticipated changes*.
- a. Have you *already* made changes to program curriculum, instruction, and/or assessment as a result of the policy? If so, please describe one or two examples.
  - b. To what degree has content or curriculum *already* been changed?
    - i) Please rate the level of change:
      - 0 = No change
      - 1 = Little change
      - 2 = Moderate change
      - 3 = Significant change
      - 4 = Extreme change
  - c. To what degree have instructional strategies *already* been changed?
    - i) Please rate the level of change:
      - 0 = No change
      - 1 = Little change
      - 2 = Moderate change
      - 3 = Significant change
      - 4 = Extreme change
  - d. To what degree have the course-based assignments and/or assessments *already* been changed?
    - i) Please rate the level of change:
      - 0 = No change
      - 1 = Little change
      - 2 = Moderate change
      - 3 = Significant change
      - 4 = Extreme change
  - e. Are there any *anticipated* changes to coursework as a result of the CalAPA policy? Please describe.

### III. Fieldwork

3. We are interested in understanding how the CalAPA policy is changing fieldwork in your programs. We will begin by discussing *current changes* and then conclude with a question about *anticipated changes*.
- Have you *already* made changes to fieldwork as a result of the policy? If so, please describe one or two examples.
  - To what degree have fieldwork placements *already* changed? Please rate the level of change:
    - No change
    - Little change
    - Moderate change
    - Significant change
    - Extreme change
  - Are there any *anticipated* changes to fieldwork as a result of the policy? If so, please describe.
- 

### IV. Resources

4. We are interested in understanding how the allocation of resources is changing to meet the requirements of the new CalAPA policy. We will begin by discussing *current changes* and then conclude with a question about *anticipated changes*.
- Have you *already* made changes to program resources as a result of the policy? If so, please describe one or two examples of changes in program resources.
  - To what degree has the new CalAPA policy *already* changed the investment in human resources? Please rate the level of change:
    - No change
    - Little change
    - Moderate change
    - Significant change
    - Extreme change
  - To what degree has the new CalAPA policy *already* changed the allocation of material and equipment resources? Please rate the level of change:
    - No change
    - Little change
    - Moderate change
    - Significant change
    - Extreme change



d. To what degree has the new CalAPA policy *already* changed time allocations?

Please rate the level of change:

0 = No change

1 = Little change

2 = Moderate change

3 = Significant change

4 = Extreme change

e. Are there any *anticipated* changes to program resources? If so, please describe.

.....  
**V. Support**

5. What kinds of CalAPA policy support have helped inform program staff so far?

6. What kinds of CalAPA policy support do program staff anticipate will be helpful with implementation in the future?

.....  
**VI. Other**

7. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the impact or potential impact of the CalAPA policy?