

# Effective Principals for California Schools

Building a Coherent Leadership Development System

INTEGRATED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



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The purpose of the Integrated Leadership Development Initiative (ILDI) is to collaboratively guide and support leader development and improve conditions of leadership through articulation, professional development, quality review, policy assessment and recommendations, and resource sharing and development so that there are highly accomplished leaders in every district and school in California.

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# Preface

## Preface

The Integrated Leadership Development Initiative (ILDI) is a statewide collaborative, with representatives from the California Department of Education, the Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, the California Commission for Teacher Credentialing, California’s public and private universities, the Association of California School Administrators, the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, the Regional Educational Laboratory West at WestEd, and the California Comprehensive Assistance Center at WestEd (see appendix C). ILDI first came together in 2006. Its purpose was to advance leadership development as a key strategy for improving California schools and districts, by making research and policy recommendations come to life in a coherent and cohesive system of leadership development.<sup>1</sup>

Over the course of the 2008–09 academic year, members of ILDI worked to analyze and summarize recent research and best practice literature about education leadership and map their findings against earlier leadership-related recommendations of the Governor’s and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction’s various education task forces. In doing so, ILDI members consulted with others in their own agencies and organizations for research recommendations, resources, and data. They also engaged representatives from other agencies, organizations, and centers in providing ideas and comments. The result is this principal workforce development proposal.

A list of the ILDI member representatives who contributed to this document is in appendix C.

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<sup>1</sup>The Wallace Foundation. (2006). *Leadership for learning: Making the connections among state, district and school policies and practices*. New York: Author.



# Introduction

California continues to face significant challenges in its efforts to close the achievement gap and to make sure all students are prepared for success in higher education and other post-high-school endeavors. Some schools and districts have been making varying degrees of progress, yet many others continue to struggle. If we are to achieve this important goal — and to do so sooner rather than later — all available strategies and resources must be brought to bear in smart and coordinated ways. One of the most critical areas in which this needs to occur is principal development, because an effective principal is essential to school success.

To guarantee that every California public school has an effective leader, the state’s education community — from legislative policymakers and staff, the state department of education, and principal preparation and credentialing programs, to county and local boards, superintendents, and other decision-makers — must move beyond endless blue-sky dreams and discussions. It must take action to ensure that the state has a *coherent and comprehensive system for principal development and support*, a system that, in turn, would directly and positively affect teacher efficacy and student learning.

Rather than providing a broad vision for this system, this proposal, *Effective Principals for California Schools – Building a Coherent Leadership Development System*, starts by suggesting an organizing frame for principal development. This frame — a continuum of career stages, with related system support — recognizes that principals develop their capacity to successfully lead schools over the course of their career and that

the stages in that career are distinct, but interrelated. These stages are *aspiring* (identification and recruitment), *candidate* (preparation and licensing), *novice* (induction), *developing* (continuous improvement), and *expert* (recognition for accomplished practice).

Against this continuum, the education community can map California’s current and largely dispersed principal development and support efforts, including policies, programs, resources, and common practices. With that mapping the community can then begin to identify gaps where something more or something different is needed in order to have a coherent and comprehensive system that ensures principals and principal candidates are *learning leadership* and are supported in *demonstrating effective leadership* as described in the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders and accompanying Descriptions of Practice.

This proposal is premised on an expectation that the education community will work together to

make this system a reality. As a starting point for that collaborative effort, this document examines each stage of the leadership development continuum, providing related research, best practices, and any relevant information from earlier state task force reports; in doing so, it draws on the authors' collective years of on-the-ground leadership development experience. For each stage, readers will also find a summary perspective, as well as implications for action that are tailored to the roles and responsibilities of various sectors of the California education community. Taken as a whole, the proposal is intended to guide the state's education community in planning and implementing a cohesive set of improvements to strengthen the principal pipeline so as to better ensure a quality workforce that would make it possible, and more probable, for every California school to be led by an effective principal.

### **Why School Leadership? What the Research Says**

Research confirms what practitioners and others in education have long known: Strong, focused school-site leadership is a critical component in student and school success, including school improvement. It is critical in setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization. Findings from Edmonds and from Cotton illustrate the principal's influence on various activities leading to school effectiveness.<sup>2</sup> A series of studies by Hallinger and Heck concluded that the combined direct and indirect effects of school leadership on pupil outcomes were educationally significant.<sup>3</sup>

More recent meta-analyses by Waters, Marzano, and McNulty indicate a significant correlation between successful implementation of principals' responsibilities and student achievement.<sup>4</sup> Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom further confirm that leadership is strongly linked to student achievement — second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that

contribute to student learning, especially in high-need schools.<sup>5</sup>

Research shows, too, that the quality of principal leadership directly influences teacher retention<sup>6</sup> and that, in low-performing schools, teachers who decide to stay on the job do so because of their relationship with their school's principal.<sup>7</sup> A 2005 study found that high-quality leadership was the single greatest predictor of whether or not high schools made “adequate yearly progress” as defined by *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) — greater than either school size or teacher retention.<sup>8</sup>

Additional national studies and statewide reports have noted that turning around failing schools requires the work of an effective principal.<sup>9</sup> And in a practice guide from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences on turning around chronically low-performing schools, ensuring strong leadership was one of four research-based recommendations.<sup>10</sup>

### **Leadership as a National Priority Missing from the California Agenda**

Developing leaders is increasingly recognized as a key strategy for improving schools and closing student achievement gaps. In 2001, the Institute for Educational Leadership issued a report identifying what it sees as the state's role in ensuring “leadership for student learning.”<sup>11</sup> It recommended that state education departments, together with other state agencies, “develop a policy framework...to guide funding and implementation of all programs and services that are intended to support student learning or outcomes that research suggests are closely related to learning” (p. 21). More specifically, it urges states to “provide support for leadership development at the state, district, and school levels” (Ibid.). A recent report by the National Governors' Association suggests that states focus



on policies and practices that improve the education workforce by strategically investing in teachers and principals.<sup>12</sup>

Under *NCLB*, federal programs have invested millions to build the capacity of state education agencies to work to improve districts and schools, through specific regulations, accountability measures, and comprehensive support centers. And now, as part of the new administration's Race to the Top agenda, producing and supporting great teachers and great leaders is seen as the highest priority. In this section of the national improvement strategy, focus is on preparing and supporting effective principals, placing them in schools where they are needed most, and ensuring that all principals have access to quality professional development linked to improving leadership performance.

But even with research and common sense — and, now, federal priorities — highlighting the importance of skilled leaders in promoting student learning, leadership development has not been prominent on the California action agenda, pushed to the background by the press of other urgent education challenges. Reports from task forces formed in 2007 by California's governor and state superintendent in anticipation of the "Year of Education" only infrequently mentioned principals or site leaders specifically and offered just a few lines to guide administrator improvements, enhancements, or related resource allocations.<sup>13</sup>

Developing a sufficient number of highly effective school and district leaders has been a low priority in California's recent improvement activities. At the state level, only certification requirements and a single, state-supported professional development program currently target administrator training and support. The state's declining funding for professional learning, its focus on critical short-term, deadline-driven interventions for students and

teachers, and the private sector's view that various uncoordinated efforts continue to operate as isolated "silos," have resulted in K–12 school leadership development remaining on the back burner. Moreover, it is difficult to get an overall picture of site leadership in our state, in terms of both systems and practice, because there is only limited and piecemeal data collection, a byproduct of the state's inattention to the principalship. With some pieces of a principal development system already in play here, an important next step is to lay out these pieces and analyze what's there, what's effective, what should be differentiated or expanded, what should be abandoned for lack of evidence of results, and what the gaps are.

From research and practice literature, we already have a good picture of what effective site leadership looks like. Principal quality is broadly described through the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL) and illustrated in more detail in the Descriptions of Practice (see appendices A and B). The CPSEL, which directly align with the research-based national Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium Policy Standards,<sup>14</sup> are part of state policy for administrator certification programs. Though used statewide to some degree (e.g., used in professional development by the Association of California School Administrators, embedded in the professional development programs of some but not all districts), the challenge is to ensure that the CPSEL are used consistently in all professional development and support for principals throughout the state and more importantly, that they guide the specific leadership practice needed in every California school. If the CPSEL were used more systematically statewide, they could serve as the basis for coordination and collaboration around all leadership development and support in California. The remainder of this document, with its stage-by-stage

discussion of principal development and support, is intended to start us on that road. More specifically, the implications for action in each section focus on changes to existing policies and practices at various levels of education decision-making that, when implemented, are most likely to contribute to improving and coalescing the state's principal preparation and support system. By calling out these changes, the Integrated Leadership Development Initiative is extending an invitation to take collaborative action to transform current leadership development practices into a coherent system that ensures an effective principal in every school in California.

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## Aspiring Principal: Identification and Recruitment

High-quality teachers are the foundation for developing accomplished principals. Identifying and recruiting teacher leaders, along with others who have demonstrated leadership skill, is key to establishing a strong cadre of principals able to move schools to improve and students to achieve. Recruitment is more than finding sufficient numbers of licensed individuals to fill job vacancies, more than passively collecting sign-ups for the position. Recruiting requires attracting candidates who see themselves being successful in the role of principal and, then, identifying those in the pool who are — or may become — a perfect fit for the work.<sup>1</sup> The recruiting process includes both inviting and persuading skilled and experienced teachers to commit to specific preparation pathways, another certification, and significant leadership responsibilities.

### Administrator Shortage?

Many district administrators report that filling principal vacancies is getting harder and harder. Conversations about this challenge almost always include stories about the dwindling pool of good candidates — in fact, the small number of applicants, period. Whether in historically attractive districts and schools or in low-performing ones, human resource professionals speak of having fewer applicants per opening and needing a longer time to find an acceptable candidate. Finding principals for high schools, low-performing schools, and special population sites (e.g., court schools, continuation high schools) is seen as even more problematic. The general conclusion among those doing the hiring is that there is a principal shortage.

But what are the facts? Any perception that there is a shortage of principals is not supported by empiri-

cal research.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence of a nationwide shortage of people certified to serve as principals.<sup>3</sup> Data show that contrary to popular opinion, there are more licensed administrators than there are projected job openings. The same is true within California. Data collected by the Commission for Teacher Credentialing show there are sufficient licensed administrators to fill projected openings.<sup>4</sup> (Reported numbers for licenses are in *Preparation and Licensing* section.)

In some cases, seeking an administrator credential is not related to seeking a principal role. One of several similar anecdotes offered at a statewide meeting considering principal preparation<sup>5</sup> told of a university instructor who asked students how many planned to become principals. He was stunned to find that only 3 of 24 students raised their hands, one of those confessing that she hadn't made up her mind

“for sure.” His follow-up inquiry revealed that many of his students took courses in the administrator preparation program to collect professional development credit for salary enhancement. Becoming a school administrator was not their major objective in seeking an administrative credential. Levine confirms this when he suggests that, because 96 percent of public school districts in all 50 states award salary increases to teachers for advanced degrees or course credit, many administrator preparation programs enroll students who have no interest in pursuing the principalship but are interested, instead, in improving their salary step.<sup>6</sup> In light of this issue, counting the number of credentialed administrators provides only limited information about principal supply questions. That said, a Regional Educational Laboratory West report does project particularly high needs for school administrators (due to expected retirement and student enrollment growth) in some areas of California over the next decade (by 2018).<sup>7</sup>

### **Motivation to Undertake the Challenges**

Thus, the principal shortage issue appears to be not just about whether there are sufficient numbers of credentialed candidates, but also about whether newly eligible administrators are motivated to apply for this important position — and whether effective veterans are motivated to stay. A recent report by the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning cites a 2002 California study of one of the state’s large urban school districts in which only 10 percent of eligible candidates reported that they would be likely to apply for a principalship.<sup>8</sup> Although this is the only study of this issue in California, anecdotes abound about reluctant leaders in this state, that is, educators who are qualified for the job of principal, but who are not excited about and, therefore, do not apply for available positions. And research in other states (e.g., Washington, New York, and Illinois) suggests that this is not just a California issue.<sup>9</sup>

The perceived downsides of the principalship are not insignificant. Among them are accountability pressure that is disproportionate to principals’ level of authority; lack of parental support; having less job security than their own teachers; loss of close interaction with students; the challenge of balancing work and home life; and politics and bureaucracy.<sup>10</sup> Similar factors have been cited in numerous other surveys and studies. For many individuals, the position of principal is seen as unattractive and not doable. For many teacher leaders contemplating their first administrative position, serving as a principal may not seem worth the tradeoffs.

On the other hand, there are also studies and reports identifying the reasons that some choose to take on the job. Aspiring principals in a focus group conducted by Learning Point Associates identified five aspects of the job they found particularly attractive: giving back to the community and transforming children’s lives, developing and realizing a vision, leading and supporting teachers, wielding influence, and progressing on a career path.<sup>11</sup> These educators felt that, as a principal, they could have an impact on the viability of a school and community. For them, serving as principal was worth it.

Individual decisions about whether being a principal is “worth it” directly affects whether licensed administrators apply for or remain in principal positions. A recent California report showed that “[...]self-perception of the ability to perform in this role was the strongest predictor of whether or not ‘eligible’ ” candidates applied.<sup>12</sup> The question for policymakers and practitioners becomes, how do we shape a California system of leadership development that minimizes the “not worth it” factors and maximizes the “worth it” factors?

Available data don’t offer much explanation for why so many of those who get California administrator licenses don’t pursue principal jobs. Drawing data-

informed conclusions about what is necessary to motivate educators to enter California’s principal workforce is critical in formulating actions to address this challenge. Meanwhile, further complicating the recruitment picture is that, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the pool of potential leadership is shrinking, with “the number of 35–44 year olds in the workforce, the so-called ‘key leader age,’” expected to drop by 15 percent over the next decade.<sup>13</sup>

### Retaining Effective Principals

Principal retention practices also contribute to a perceived principal shortage. (Additional discussions about principal retention are in the *Induction, Continuous Improvement, and Highly Accomplished* sections.) National studies show many principals reporting their intent to leave their job before they are eligible for retirement. Compared to their counterparts nationally, California principals are much more likely to report plans to leave their job. Only 48 percent of California principals report plans to stay in their job until retirement, compared to 67 percent nationwide. Only 22 percent of the state’s secondary principals plan to stay.<sup>14</sup> Motivating and supporting effective veteran principals, those who have the most experience, to stay and grow in their positions is a serious challenge.

District hiring practices related to candidate age also may contribute to principal shortages in some places. For example, a study in New York showed that some districts there favor hiring older novice principals.<sup>15</sup> With hiring ages closer to retirement age, principal vacancies naturally come along more quickly. And, particularly relevant to current times, some districts offer incentives for early retirement as a budget-cutting strategy. This shortens the principal’s length of service and prematurely opens a principal position.

### Quantity versus Quality

Having a large enough pool of principal candidates is meaningless if the quality of those in the pool is insufficient. One of the most critical questions is how to identify those candidates — or potential candidates — who have or are likely to develop knowledge and skills critical to success in the job.

Building *teacher* leadership is a commonly suggested strategy for enhancing the capacity of early-career administrators. Because administrator candidates in California are required to have at least three years of successful teaching behind them, the quality of the principal pool depends on the quality and experience of teachers. Providing teachers with opportunities to practice leadership skills in projects that require progressively more independent and complex practice sets the path toward, and maybe the appetite for, the principal role.<sup>16</sup>

As expressed in an early report by the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s P-16 Council, “The general population must understand that the recruitment and retention of superb teachers, administrators, and support personnel ... is the single most crucial component of the state’s strong competitive future.”<sup>17</sup> Ensuring quality principals in every California school means addressing both critical recruitment and retention issues. Addressing both, along with other challenges, demands a coherent set of policies and practices focused on finding, developing, and keeping effective principals.

To date, little research-based information has been available about the quality of the current and future principal supply in California. Now, with statewide consensus on using the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL) as criteria for describing quality leadership, and with collaborative efforts such as that of the Integrated Leadership Development Initiative and its partners, California may be able to start collecting data on this



important issue. Requirements outlined in the Race to the Top application, thought to foretell future federal expectations, point to some of the indicators likely to be used in judging principal quality.

Identifying and recruiting aspiring leaders with the potential to be effective principals is an important first step in building a statewide leadership development system. However, it is not sufficient to ensure a highly qualified principal in every school. Done well, recruitment builds a strong base for the second stage of development, Preparation and Licensure, which is addressed in the next chapter.

### Identification and Recruitment: Implications for Action

To strengthen the *Identification and Recruitment* stage in California's principal workforce development effort, the actions identified below are critical.

- \* Have the State Legislature and state-level agencies join the Commission on Teacher Credentialing in adopting the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL) as the base for state leadership development in California.
- \* Extend CALTIDES database to collect and analyze administrator data that informs issues and potential solutions related to projected principal shortages statewide and in regions.
- \* Analyze existing data and/or conduct new studies that address recruitment and retention issues faced by the range of California school districts.
- \* Conduct studies to identify why teachers do not apply for principal positions and why administrators leave the principalship prior to retirement (e.g., moving to district office).
- \* Build financial incentives and internships to recruit principals.
- \* Work collaboratively with state and local partners to develop a principal recruitment campaign, emphasizing what makes being a principal “worth it.”
- \* Review current policies that constrain “non-traditional” candidates (e.g., those who do not have three years teaching experience) from applying for or receiving a principalship.
- \* Work collaboratively and systematically with universities and other approved preparation programs to set up processes to identify potential instructional leaders beyond “self-selection.”
- \* Develop additional partnerships with local universities and programs approved for administrator certification to offer a range of licensure options and professional development opportunities for principals.
- \* Work with districts to redefine the principal job to make it more doable, employing creative approaches to new administrative structures, such as distributed leadership teams.
- \* Develop a “grow your own” strategy to build teacher interest in becoming principals by providing opportunities to try out administrator roles, for example, by shadowing effective principals, working in internships, and leading schoolwide activities.
- \* Provide additional incentive pay for principals who demonstrate effectiveness and lead in schools that serve high concentrations of low-income and minority students, including rural schools.
- \* Increase administrator-to-teacher salary differentials to encourage talented principals to assume challenging positions.
- \* Support school districts in developing leadership teams and/or quasi-administrative internships or other programs for teacher leaders interested in the principalship.
- \* Establish training programs for non-instructional School Administrative Managers who, by assuming specific administrative tasks, would enable principals to focus on their role as “learning leaders” and would, thus, help make the principal job more “doable.”

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# Principal Candidate

## Principal Candidate: Preparation and Licensing

It is in this second stage along the principal development continuum, Preparation and Licensing, that principal candidates attain the basic knowledge and skills required by the state to become authorized, or licensed, to work as a site administrator. At this stage, candidates develop the entry-level expertise needed to carry out, at a minimum, the technical tasks required of principals.<sup>1</sup> However, what those “entry-level” expectations should reasonably be, what constitutes adequate preparation, and how best to provide it are hotly debated questions.

### A Question of How Best to Prepare Leaders

Significant differences exist in current approaches to pre-service development. For example, in some states and countries there is a belief that incoming principals must have completed a university course in leadership and administration and be licensed to become practicing principals. In other places, people believe that pre-service training is not necessary and that on-the-job experience constitutes adequate preparation.<sup>2</sup>

For years, in California and other states in the U.S., universities provided the majority of administrator coursework leading to a recommendation by the university that a principal candidate be authorized to work as a school administrator. Traditionally, these preparation programs were management oriented and consisted of classes in education philosophy, psychology, finance, and human resources, with limited attention to curriculum, instruction, or assessment. Some programs included field-based activities as well. More recently, preparation pro-

grams have included greater emphasis on teacher supervision and evaluation. With high-stakes accountability under *NCLB*, some programs also have updated principal preparation requirements to include instruction and assessment skills, reading and math training, and attention to specific grade levels (e.g., elementary, middle school, high school), student populations (e.g., English learners, special education), and school performance levels (e.g., low-performing). Emerging alternatives are providing course work as a base for more and more independent projects, some following an apprenticeship model. In addition, some states, including California, offer a test-only option that enables candidates who pass the test to start work as principals without necessarily having participated in a preparation program per se.

### Criticism of Current Efforts

While almost every approach has both supporters and detractors, studies about which approaches are

most effective are limited. But this does not deter critics from highlighting perceived shortcomings of the various approaches. Some loudly criticize traditional university programs for being too theoretical and academic, too general, disjointed, and/or out of touch with the real world. For example, a national survey by Public Agenda found that, among respondents, 80 percent of superintendents and 69 percent of principals think that leadership training in graduate schools of education does not address the realities of today's school districts.<sup>3</sup>

Recent efforts to address these issues have led to the development of alternative preparation offered by universities, district-based partnerships, regional consortia, and some newly formed organizations. These alternatives often focus on recruiting or serving specific underrepresented populations, and many have developed as a result of a special program or private funding intended to elicit innovation. Critics of such approaches see them as boutique programs for small numbers of participants, and they point to the programs' dependence on incentives that cannot be offered widely or be sustained over the long term with normal state or district revenues. They also point out that the non-traditional approaches have fewer requirements, detrimental shortcuts, and that the programs lack the rigor that fully readies new principals for the wide range of challenges facing today's site administrators. Of particular concern to many is the test-only option that substitutes a single examination for either traditional or non-traditional preparation approaches.

Among the critics of current principal preparation practices are districts searching to fill open positions. Many of them complain that within the small pool of available licensed principals who apply for an open position, there may be wide variance in competency, with some candidates who meet district-level expectations and others who do not. In this latter category might be individuals who,

though technically qualified, are perceived by districts to be under-qualified or not a good match to the open position, for example.

Such complaints contribute to the widespread perception of a principal shortage and to a general dissatisfaction with how states and universities are addressing the challenge of ensuring an adequate number of high-quality candidates. Questions regarding various principal preparation programs, practices, and outcomes have led to criticism that state licensing agencies are not using their power to influence the content of preparation programs or licensing and renewal requirements.

### Elements of Effective Preparation Programs

Preparation programs should be considered in terms of both content and structure. Recent literature about leadership development programs suggests that some features are common across effective preparation programs. These features are discussed in the bulleted paragraphs below.

- \* Meaningful principal preparation programs ensure that their content is well suited to the challenges confronting principals in a new era of schooling.<sup>4</sup> Jamentz (2002), for example, suggests an instructional leadership program that emphasizes matters of pedagogy, curriculum, and classroom management because principals must be actively engaged in constructing standards-based curricula, aligning assessment, and demonstrating and coaching effective teaching and learning practices.<sup>5</sup> Others highlight a need in preparation programs for increased attention to issues around race, class, and culture. The call to close the achievement gap has placed greater demand on principals to effect change in areas where many have had little direct experience.<sup>6</sup>
- \* The knowledge and skill levels of those entering the Preparation stage should be a key consideration in developing an effective program. Candidate capacity should determine “to a great extent what

kind of curriculum can be effective and what kind of leader will emerge” because of it.<sup>7</sup> (See Recruitment chapter for additional discussion.)

- \* Studies describing what is *not* included in current preparation programs note that effective principal preparation ought to include considerable attention to accountability, managing with data, and utilizing research; to hiring, recruiting, evaluating, and terminating personnel; to overseeing an effective instructional program; and to exposing candidates to diverse views regarding educational and organizational management.<sup>8</sup>
- \* Several program characteristics have been identified or promoted in reports and studies that have not yet been scientifically vetted. These characteristics, which increasingly are being recognized as important for effective principal preparation, include a knowledgeable faculty of university professors and experienced practitioners; tight collaboration between universities and school districts; a coherent curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership; formalized mentoring; case- or problem-based instruction; cohort groups; field-based internships; and change management and organizational development.<sup>9</sup>
- \* More critical than features or structure, of course, is whether candidates achieve the desired program outcomes, that is, what graduates can actually *do* as a result of their training. LaPointe and colleagues (2007) conclude that effective programs train principals to develop and evaluate curriculum, use data to diagnose the learning needs of students, coach teachers, and plan professional development. In addition, such “programs aim to develop transformational leaders who work to improve the school as an organization, develop norms and structures that support high-quality teaching and learning, enhance the capacity of the faculty to meet the needs of students, and implement strategies that will improve student outcomes.”<sup>10</sup>

By presenting the knowledge, skills, and attitudes requisite for candidates to be effective principals, leadership standards, which have been widely adopted across the states, provide broad guidance

for the development of preparation options. With standards in mind, preparation program leaders can design approaches, curriculum, and experiences leading to licensure and desired entry-level practice.<sup>11</sup>

### Preparation Programs Framed by Leadership Standards

A key way in which states influence the content and quality of principal preparation is by using standards to frame requirements for certification of a preparation program. Adams and Copland<sup>12</sup> and Darling-Hammond<sup>13</sup> write that a coherent, comprehensive curriculum for principal preparation is aligned with state and professional standards that emphasize instructional leadership. In the *Handbook of Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Administrative Services Credentials*, California’s Commission for Teacher Credentialing (CTC) describes preconditions and program standards for principal preparation.<sup>14</sup> The program standards were adopted in 2003 and have been fully implemented. In the fall of 2009, the standards were reviewed and modified to more clearly link to the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL), which are based on the national ISLLC leadership standards (see appendix A). The six standards, which articulate a comprehensive range of expectations/functions for principals, are drawn from research and effective practice and are critical elements in principal preparation, as well as throughout a principal’s career. While all of the standards contribute to effective leadership, particular emphasis by state educators implementing them in AB 430 and in districts currently is on building knowledge and skills in instructional leadership.

Several types of state-authorized leadership preparation options are available in California, including traditional university-based programs, alternative programs (e.g., organizational partnerships, district-led programs, and those led by nonprofit

organizations), completion of AB 430 training, and the above-described test-only option. By requiring all options (including the questions represented in the test) to align with common leadership standards and, for preparation programs, with common program standards, the state is building a coherent system of principal preparation that acknowledges the need for different pathways.

While progress has been made in adding rigor to California's pre-service options and in aligning them to standards and other relevant state requirements, a critical question remains: Are our current approaches producing a sufficiency of leaders whose vision, energy, and skills can successfully yield the kind of schools we seek for our children?<sup>15</sup> Although the Commission on Teacher Credentialing has exercised its authority to approve preparation programs that are aligned to leadership standards and that meet other program requirements, it has had limited resources for monitoring program implementation or for developing a picture of programs' long-term effects by tracking the readiness of new principals to meet expectations for early practice on the job. Being able to track the effectiveness of principal preparation requirements in this way is important if we are to determine which approaches, if any (including the test-only option) are providing what beginning principals need in order to be successful in their new positions.

### **The Value of Real-World Experience: Internship**

One point of agreement between critics of current practice and researchers looking at promising practices is that principal candidates benefit from an internship, that is, on-the-ground application of newly learned leadership theory. An internship is described as a planned and sustained clinical experience that is supervised by an expert,<sup>16</sup> an opportunity for aspiring principals to experience job-embedded learning through problem solving

and by being coached.<sup>17</sup> A quality internship should provide candidates with hands-on experience that prepares them, *before* they are placed as head of a school, to lead the important work of school improvement.<sup>18</sup> “The well-designed internship expands the knowledge and skills of candidates while also gauging their ability to apply new learning in authentic settings as they contend with problems that have real-world consequences” — the ultimate performance test.<sup>19</sup>

Across states, internships for principal candidates are widely required and seen as a critical component in preparation programs. In traditional university-based programs, the internship is a segment within the course of study, and it might include problem-based projects or short-term fieldwork. In alternative preparation approaches, the internship is more likely a long-term, field-based assignment or apprenticeship that serves as the foundation of the preparation program, driving what knowledge and skills are developed. Some internships are paid positions, some are not. Whether available through a traditional or an alternative preparation option, a successful internship calls for principal candidates to receive skilled mentoring or coaching support throughout.<sup>20</sup>

Findings from a 2003 study indicated that 63 percent of principals nationwide had participated in an internship as part of their training experience. In New York, noted for its effective principal preparation, 92 percent of principals had participated, while in California, only 27 percent had done so.<sup>21</sup>

In California, CTC guidelines indicate that preparation programs should include “knowledge and practice components requiring significant field experiences focused on developing leadership and management skills.”<sup>22</sup> However, depending on which preparation pathway candidates choose, they may engage in an internship experience in different

ways. For example, the internship could be a component of a traditional preparation program through a university project or short-term field assignment. Or the internship could be an alternative pathway option through which intern credentials are issued to candidates that are employed as administrators by school districts while concurrently enrolled in a university preparation program. CTC reports that, in 2007–08, 256 intern credentials were issued. For some candidates using the test-only option, an internship is not part of the equation.

Giving principal candidates the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills in real situations, with the support of a mentor or coach, is emerging as a critical component in developing their effectiveness. Thus, data collection and analysis on current internship practices is needed in order to continuously upgrade preparation programs and to track results.

### How Effective Is Our Preparation Strategy?

What constitutes adequate preparation for initial entry into the profession? Are our current approaches sufficiently preparing licensed candidates to take on the most challenging principal assignments — the ones to which new administrators are most likely to be assigned? Too frequently, the answer is, we are not sure.

Data about the effect of specific program features on graduates' subsequent ability to perform critical tasks on the job are still limited. Even with consensus about core program features, the field lacks knowledge about the efficacy of these features under varying conditions, the specific dimensions of the features that are required to produce powerful learning, the conditions that affect their implementation, and the combination of factors that must be in place “for learning to be robust and for candidates to develop a deep commitment to the work.”<sup>23</sup>

Because there is insufficient documentation to say

what works, the debate continues about which current approaches, if any, are effective in which settings (e.g., in a “performing school” versus a “lowperforming school,” in a high-SES district versus a low-SES district). Nationally, studies that track the relationship between particular preparation approaches and principal effectiveness and retention are emerging. Currently, however, there are no long-term California-based research efforts studying the effects of preparation options to understand which best prepare new administrators, or studying how preparation approaches link to principal performance or retention. As noted in the *Policy Brief on Strengthening Education Leadership in CA*, if we are to have a more cohesive state system for preparing principals, “there must be an increase in knowledge about and understanding of this cohort of educators.”<sup>24</sup>

### Licensed to Lead

Virtually all states have a system for authorizing who can work as a school principal by determining whether an individual has attained at least the baseline level of professional accomplishment deemed necessary to serve as an entry-level principal. In California, the system is most commonly referred to as *licensing*, while the outcome for the authorized principal is a *credential*. The state agency responsible for establishing and overseeing the licensing process for public school educators here is the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), which presides over a two-tiered system for licensing administrators. The first-tier credential is the *Preliminary Administrative Services Credential*. This initial authorization to work as an administrator is valid for up to five years while the new principal works in a school and goes through the process of earning the second-tier credential, the *Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential*. Each tier has eligibility criteria and its credential can be attained through one of several optional pathways.



## Preliminary Administrative Services Credential

To obtain a preliminary credential, candidates must pass the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST); possess a valid credential as a teacher, specialist (such as in reading or math), or pupil services provider (such as a counselor, social worker, or psychologist); and have completed three successful, full-time years in that role. In addition, aspiring principals must do *one* of the following options:

- a. complete a CTC-accredited preparation program;
- b. complete a CTC-accredited one-year internship offered by a college or university in partnership with the employing district;
- c. pass the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) offered by the Educational Testing Service (though a newly developed California exam is projected to replace the SLLA in the spring of 2011).

To be a CTC-accredited program or internship, an option must meet all of the requirements in the *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Programs*. Both of the first two options result in a recommendation by the program (e.g., university) that the CTC issue a “certificate of eligibility,” a certificate that allows a district to hire a candidate. Once a candidate has accepted a position as principal, he or she turns that certificate into the CTC and receives, instead, the preliminary credential. In the case of those who pursue the test-only option, once they pass the test they apply directly to CTC for the certificate of eligibility. Once principals start work under a preliminary credential, they may begin working toward the professional clear credential.

In 2007–08, CTC reported issuing 2,355 Certificates of Eligibility. In that same year, 675 Preliminary Credentials were issued. In addition, the CTC report showed 1,452 direct applications to CTC that year. Direct applications result in preliminary cre-

denials being issued directly to individuals who have either been prepared out of state or who have received Certificates of Eligibility in prior years, and are now employed.<sup>25</sup>

## Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential

To earn a Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential (Clear credential), a principal must complete two years of full-time administrative service while working under a preliminary credential and, in addition, do *one* of the following:

- a. complete a CTC-accredited college- or university standards-based program;
- b. demonstrate mastery of fieldwork performance through a CTC-accredited program, which requires candidates to show that they have reached a level of administrative competence that merits recommendation for the credential;
- c. complete an alternative guidelines-based program approved by the CTC; or
- d. complete the AB 430 Administrator Training Program, which consists of 80 hours of coursework approved by the State Board of Education and an 80-hour practicum of additional professional development.

The Clear credential is valid for five years and may be renewed by completing an application and paying the fee.<sup>26</sup> No additional professional development is required for renewal. In 2007–08, CTC reported issuing first-time Clear credentials for 4,738 administrators and renewing or reissuing 6,396 administrative credentials.<sup>27</sup>

By establishing policies on program accreditation and candidate licensing, states control entry into the field of education administration.<sup>28</sup> In creating these policies, state leaders signal the qualifications the public may expect in their school leaders as these administrators enter the profession. However, as challenges to

ensuring that every student achieves increase, principals must further develop their initial leadership skills. They must continuously improve their practice, not only to keep up, but more importantly, to lead teachers and students to improved teaching and learning. The foundation provided in quality preparation-level experiences is a critical component of a cohesive system of principal development, but it is only the beginning.

### Preparation and Licensing: Implications for Action

To strengthen the *Preparation and Licensing* stage in California's principal workforce development effort, the actions identified below are critical.

- \* Convene key policymakers and stakeholders to ask the question, "Are we doing preparation right?" to determine whether current preparation practices, even if improved, address what candidates will need to be successful principals.
  - \* Provide financial support for candidates to permit them to participate in an intensive preparation program with a full-time supervised internship.
  - \* Conduct a study of current preparation practices, including internships, to determine their effects on new principal readiness and performance.
  - \* Strengthen supervised field-based experiences for real-world training.
  - \* Develop guidelines for internship programs that require aspiring principals to have a broad range of experiences in *leading* school improvement.
  - \* Require and provide training for mentors of principal candidates engaged in internship programs.
  - \* Build and enhance training programs that ensure leaders have the entry-level skills and capacities to meet state leadership standards and are well prepared to meet realities of their jobs, including in challenging schools and districts.
  - \* Work with partners to reach consensus on a definition or description of entry-level knowledge and skills appropriate for newly licensed principals.
- \* Monitor the effectiveness of preparation programs by assessing both candidate performance in the preparation program and also their success on the job after completion of the program.

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# Novice Principal

## Novice Principal: Induction

After recruiting and hiring well-prepared beginning principals who show the potential to be successful school leaders, the next step is to make their role more satisfying so they will choose to stay. This stage of principal development, induction, begins when an administrator is selected to work as a principal in a district. Sometimes, experienced principals who move into a new district or who are assigned to a new school within their district are also included in the induction cycle. But it's first-time principals who are most in need of this support as, during the first two or three years on the job, they undertake the often challenging transition from *preparing* to become a principal to *being* the principal in charge of an entire school community.

### Needed Change in Induction Practices

In theory, a hiring district assumes responsibility for orienting its new principals to the ways of the district, by building up novices' knowledge, skills, and awareness of what's needed to work successfully in their new job. But many beginning principals never have the opportunity to go through a focused — and ongoing — induction process; it just doesn't exist in their district. Thinking back to their first day as a principal, many experienced site administrators will recall an orientation process that consisted of signing forms and then receiving a set of keys to the campus. A few might remember being given a “heads up” about certain challenging students or staff members and, in some cases, being told to “call if you need anything.” And for those who actually remember receiving focused district attention as new administrators, their training most probably centered on district procedures and on the need to meet compliance requirements.

The gap between the kind of information and support that some districts provide (or don't provide) for their novice principals and what novice principals actually need in order to be successful and satisfied as they begin their administrative career has always been a problem. But when viewed in the current high-stakes, high-accountability environment that already serves as an obstacle to attracting high-quality recruits,<sup>1</sup> the gap is unacceptable. In a national report based on data from a focus group of beginning principals convened by the Wallace Foundation, novices reported that when they knew what was expected of them and felt supported by their district, they were more likely to take risks to make necessary changes and to stay in the job.<sup>2</sup> Among the kinds of support they suggested that districts provide are organizing supportive cohort-based networks, providing well-trained and accountable mentors, and making sure not to place novice principals in the most difficult environments.<sup>3</sup>

## Induction as Part of State and School Improvement

Across the country, induction practices are beginning to change through state and district initiatives. Data show that by 2006, about half of the states had, for the first time, adopted mentoring requirements for newly seated principals. Another Wallace report notes that this requirement marked a major shift from the “ ‘sink-or-swim’ attitude that had long predominated toward fledgling principals and is also a sign of increased recognition that leadership preparation should not end abruptly with licensure and hiring.”<sup>4</sup>

Lessons from new induction programs are helping to define the subject matter of mentoring so that it meets not only the individual needs of new principals, but also the goals and standards of the district or state.<sup>5</sup> States are seeing novice induction as a strong lever to move forward on state-driven district and school improvement plans. Focusing training and mentoring for novice principals on “leading for student achievement” situates new principal induction within their real-world environment — that is, in the demands of meeting improvement goals. Ohio, for example, mandates two years of support for new principals and links this requirement to other interventions in the state’s system of support for underperforming schools and districts under *No Child Left Behind*.

Local districts, too, are seeing the value of building induction programs that enable new principals to develop the competencies needed to meet instructional goals within their district’s education improvement strategy. Some districts mandate ongoing training for new principals. New York City, Boston, and Fairfax County, Virginia, for example, convene cohorts of new principals, in their first summer on the job and continuing throughout the school year, to focus on assessments and data,

problem analysis and communication activities, and establishment of a school vision and plan, and to provide dedicated time for principals to work with mentors. This strategy not only supports individuals, but also may positively influence schoolwide results. While other districts may have less-structured induction programs, many of them do match novices with experienced administrators, provide training in district technology, or provide periodic peer coaching sessions.

## Results Thus Far of Mentoring/Coaching as Induction Strategy

Within an induction effort, assuming there is one, can be a variety of activities to support novice principals. The dominant strategy is mentoring or coaching. Across the country and research on the topic, the terms mentoring and coaching often are used interchangeably to refer to a one-on-one relationship in which a more experienced educator observes and offers productive feedback to a less experienced educator. To the extent that the terms are intended to have different meanings, mentoring is more commonly taken to mean offering general guidance, while coaching is taken to mean being more directive. In California, and in the context of induction, the terms are often used interchangeably, as they will be in this section, to indicate a relationship in which novice principals receive support from more experienced principals, support that ranges from general orientation to deep improvement work.

While most induction programs include some form of mentoring, the effects of this support on principal performance or retention are not yet known. Leadership literature is showing that U.S. school districts, particularly large urban districts, typically do not have either well-developed or fully implemented induction programs or mentoring support. A recent study from the Consortium for Policy Research in Education notes, “Even though many districts have

induction programs and peer mentoring programs, the evidence on most of them is quite mixed, in part because few are structured around a vision of good instructional practice.”<sup>6</sup>

Hard evidence as to the effect of mentoring/coaching is emerging, but not conclusive. Studies are now isolating factors in mentoring/coaching practices that either contribute to or hinder the effect on new principal performance. They have shown that the weaker mentoring efforts tend to be those that are not based on or linked to leadership standards or those in which the selection and training of the mentors is not well defined and rigorous.<sup>7</sup> This latter finding has influenced states and national organizations to develop model training and certification programs for mentors. Other studies now under way are just beginning to look at the connection between effective principal induction and mentoring practices and improved school and student results.<sup>8</sup> There is also a scarcity of data about the efficacy of mentoring as an induction strategy and its impact on principal performance or retention rates of new principals. The insufficiency of data regarding the influence of mentoring as one induction strategy for novice principals has been a major challenge to securing ongoing funding to carry out programs long enough to be evaluated. But the results of focused induction programs with mentoring strategies are promising. And the lessons learned about what works and what doesn’t work can be used in the design of induction for California principals.

### **Efforts to Develop a Statewide Induction Strategy**

As noted earlier, many states have passed legislation to require mentoring or coaching for first-year school site administrators. Currently, California has no state-supported induction program for new principals. However, the state’s Tier II licensing process does require candidates for the Clear Professional Administrative Services Credential to

have a minimum of two years successful experience in a full-time administrative position in a public school; and, as part of program guidelines for this certification, the CTC carefully outlines program standards to include professional development and support. Some consider the establishment of these standards to be sufficient for addressing principal induction, but point to a need to strengthen authentic links among licensing requirements, program provider expectations, on-the-job duties, and the use of trained mentors. To that end, the existing requirement for earning the Clear credential could be further developed and strengthened. This could be the impetus for districts and the state to develop an induction strategy for novice principals that not only would support individual transition and growth, but also would enable the district to validate the quality of novice school principals.

California’s Tier II candidacy requirements and the principal-support efforts of individual districts notwithstanding, there are calls for California to develop — and to find the resources to support — an induction system for novice principals statewide. In 2007, Linda Darling-Hammond led a team that authored *Leadership Development in California*, a report that recommended practices for improved leadership development, including mentoring, or coaching, for new principals.<sup>9</sup> Also in 2007, a sub-committee of the P-16 Council suggested that “the state agencies responsible for administrative credentialing should require new administrators, as well as experienced school- and district-level leaders who are hired into new positions, to participate in publicly financed leadership induction and support programs for a minimum of two years.”<sup>10</sup> These are the latest efforts to implement support, including mentoring, or coaching, for beginning principals.

In 2005, the board of directors of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) formed the Task Force on Leadership Coaching and

developed a five-year strategic plan to build a leadership coaching strategy that could be available to all administrators in California, beginning with novice principals. The plan referenced the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program, the state’s established model for teacher induction. ACSA then partnered with the New Teacher Center to train coaches in the *Blended Coaching* model, which combines leadership, cognitive, and instructional coaching strategies. The plan included strategies from teacher induction programs that could logically be applied to work with novice principals. Studies on the effect of coaching are just emerging.

The ACSA strategic plan outlined curriculum, approaches, and timelines for instituting a coaching initiative and provided ways to ensure recruitment, training, and certification of quality coaches. In addition, the plan pressed for state resources for principal induction and support by noting that “BTSA owes much of its success to the fact that it is well funded and organized.”<sup>11</sup> The strategic plan proposed ways to develop broad partnerships to help fund and implement novice principal coaching throughout the state. The strategic plan was the base for work with legislative staff to develop a sponsored bill for new principal coaching, but the bill did not move forward due to budget cuts.

In lieu of a dedicated induction initiative for new principals, some districts may be using the models and practicum from AB 430, the only state-supported professional development program. Although support for new principals is not AB 430’s primary purpose, the program may provide a professional development component that is needed by novices. Collecting data on what induction programs exist within districts and also whether districts are using AB 430 training as a proxy for induction would provide useful information as the state moves forward on designing and implementing effective induction models.

To establish a full continuum of high-quality leader development, California must attend to the induction stage for new principals. It is one component in a multifaceted approach to enhancing novice principals’ capacity to successfully lead schools from the start of their careers. When novice principals are able to improve and broaden their portfolio of skills, they are on a path to make a difference, stay in the job, and become highly accomplished leaders who use their expertise to effect successful teaching and learning.

### Induction: Implications for Action

To strengthen the *Induction* stage in California’s principal workforce development effort, the actions identified below are critical.

- \* Establish clear, standards-based goals for induction programs — goals that are focused on the leadership required to improve teaching and learning and that are widely accepted by those providing services and support.
- \* Ensure that induction programs include coaching for new principals for at least a year and, ideally, for two or more years.
- \* Require high standards for state and district coaching programs, including rigorous recruiting of and high-quality training for coaches.
- \* Work with districts to adopt or adapt research-based models of effective induction and to exchange best practices with other districts.
- \* Collect data about the effects of coaching on developing effective, instructionally focused leaders.
- \* Commit state and local funding to sustaining long-term induction activities that maximize support to new principals, provide incentives to engage high-quality coaches, and enable research on results.

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## Developing Principal: Continuous Improvement

In a coherent principal development system, good recruitment, effective preparation options, and supportive induction over their first year or two of work provide novice principals with a solid launch into their career. Once launched, some principals excel immediately, while others develop more slowly. Either way, principals' need for continued professional growth does not end after one or two years on the job, but continues throughout their careers.<sup>1</sup> With school leadership shown to be a key factor associated with high student achievement in those schools that outperform others with similar student demographics,<sup>2</sup> there is a strong press for ensuring that all principals have skills beyond those identified in minimum licensing requirements. Complex challenges that require long-term effort and the emergence both of new policies and of new research on promising practices, with the ever-changing expectations they bring, dictate that principals extend and continuously recalibrate their knowledge, skills, and performance levels. All developing principals, sometimes known as mid-career principals (i.e., those with 3 to 30 or more years on the job), benefit from ongoing high-quality professional learning tied to their individual leadership growth and enhanced professional performance. While good professional development should result in improved principal performance, one international study indicates that ongoing professional learning for veteran administrators contributes to enhanced morale, professional commitment, and a sense of professional value and personal worth.<sup>3</sup> These, in turn, lead to greater retention of skilled and experienced leaders, those with maximum capacity for successfully guiding school improvement to raise student achievement. New study results show that schools perform better when guided by experienced principals,<sup>4</sup> which suggests that the commitment to providing long-term, high-quality professional development to mid-career principals is well worth the investment.

### Shared Responsibility for Improving Principal Performance

While some debate about who should be responsible for principal development once administrators are licensed and on the job, current education literature suggests that the job of developing principals is a shared responsibility. As education professionals, principals, themselves, are accountable for building their capacity to lead school improvement and increase student achievement. But district and

state leaders share that responsibility with them. In addition to providing principals with ongoing, high-quality in-service learning, districts should also establish a coherent system of policies and practices that encourages principals to apply their new learning to solving school challenges and holds them accountable for results. In examining exemplary leadership development programs and approaches in eight states, Darling-Hammond and colleagues found that successful in-service programs were



comprehensive, providing broad coverage of topics and skills, and integrated with recruiting, evaluating, and supervising strategies, all of which focused on instructional improvement.<sup>5</sup>

Rather than seeing the district's role as that of recruiting "born leaders," Fullan explains that district leaders "have a responsibility to invest in the development of organizational members, to take the chance that they will learn, and to create environments where people will take risks, tackle difficult problems, and be supported in this endeavor."<sup>6</sup> In making a commitment to developing principals, district leaders accept that leadership can be taught and learned<sup>7</sup> and that they must employ their full capacity to guide and support the individual and collective development of their principals. And in doing so, district leaders must understand that how they design principal expectations, professional learning, and evaluation directly affects whether or not leaders develop and, in turn, whether or not district and school improvement goals are met.

District-level professional development that provides principals with clear expectations and ongoing support to improve teaching and learning in their school requires an investment by state-level leaders. They must prioritize principal development as a key strategy to improve schools. Elmore notes, "The imperative here is for professionals, policymakers, and the public at large to recognize that performance-based accountability, if it is to do what it was intended to do — improve the quality of the educational experience for all students and increase the performance of schools — requires a strategy for investing in the knowledge and skill of educators."<sup>8</sup>

Coordination of purpose and effort is required of state and local leaders in order to implement an effective system of professional development that ensures continuous improvement within the diverse pool of mid-career principals. The shared goal of

increased student learning must fuel a partnership among principals, school districts, and state leaders to strategically manage the continuous improvement of principal performance. Shared management necessitates both districts and the state to operate from recognized practices of exemplary programs, such as "establishing policies that support principal professional development throughout their careers."<sup>9</sup> They need to consciously invest in strengthening state and local leadership development practices, specialized leadership training, performance evaluation, credential and renewal requirements, and other learning opportunities required to get results. And, state and district leaders must be willing to extend their own knowledge and skills to more effectively implement and support comprehensive and differentiated principal professional development opportunities.

### **Defining High-Quality Professional Development**

While the term professional development may seem like a broad concept, current understanding focuses on two elements: a range of learning opportunities and linkage to outcomes of improved teaching and student achievement. Elmore (2002) describes professional development as the set of knowledge- and skill-building activities that raise the capacity of teachers and administrators to respond to external demands and to engage in the improvement of practice and performance.<sup>10</sup> More recently, the National Staff Development Council has defined professional development as a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement.<sup>11</sup> Many definitions of professional development or learning can be found in education literature. However, more important than a definition of terms is an understanding of key features of professional learning that must be in place if principals are to build the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to lead continuously improving schools.

Effective professional development:



### focuses on improved teaching and learning

Effective principal professional development focuses on building the principal's capacity to address essential issues related to teaching and learning. Therefore, principal learning is directly linked not only to his or her own growth, but also to teacher development, instructional improvements, and increasing student achievement.

### is standards-based

Several sets of standards provide a frame for the design of professional development activities and programs. As in earlier stages of principal development, what principals need to know and be able to do is shaped by leadership standards (e.g., CPSEL), teaching standards, and student standards. The National Staff Development Council has established standards for effective professional development that outline content, processes, and context elements.<sup>12</sup> Taken together, these sets of standards shape professional development that is appropriately tailored to meet individual needs at various career points.<sup>13</sup> When principal action integrates new standards-based expertise into everyday practice there is an evidence-based demonstration that principal professional development has been effective and worth the investment.

### is research-based

Certain features of professional development have been identified as most likely to lead to learning and effective practice. Davis reports that quality professional learning is research-based, has curricular coherence, provides experience in authentic contexts, and uses cohort groupings.<sup>14</sup> This is similar to the key features in quality preparation programs for principals (see *Preparation* section). In-service learning for mid-career principals should be planned, rigor-

ous, and long-term. Professional learning must be focused on leading toward improved student achievement. And, it should be conducted in a way that models the type of professional learning principals should lead in their schools and districts.<sup>15</sup>

### examines personal practice

Leadership literature stresses the importance of providing time in the professional learning program for principals to reflect on how they are doing. That is, effective professional development engages principals in assessing the quality of their own practice, examining their fundamental beliefs and assumptions about leadership, learning and change, and defining how they contribute to making progress on solving their identified school challenges.<sup>16</sup>

### employs coaching for support

An outcome of professional development for mid-career principals is to change or continuously improve leadership practice. An effective professional development process enables principals to extend what they know, see new possibilities, experience different situations, develop new skills, practice existing skills in new contexts, and build their confidence based on real-life performance and success.<sup>17</sup> For some principals, receiving individual or peer coaching is an important professional development strategy. Alvarado, recognized as a key architect of New York City's early improvement initiatives, explained the importance of experienced support in helping principals increase the effectiveness of their performance: "You cannot change behavior, change practice in organizations, without large-scale coaching by people who know the content, who know how to do it, and who know how to help people learn...You need someone working with you to model, to give

feedback, to assist in the actual trying of the new practice, to support in the ongoing habituation of the new practice.”<sup>18</sup>

### provides differentiated learning opportunities

Natural variation among those in the 3-to-30-year continuous improvement stage of principal development means that, at any one point in time, some principals are meeting up with unfamiliar situations while others not only have “seen everything” but also have amassed a large repertoire of strategies from which to draw. Some principals may be strong in supervising instruction, for example, while weaker in coaching management skills. Others may have had success keeping schools on track, but little experience heading quick turnarounds in low-performing schools. High school, middle school, and elementary school principals are all similarly expected to raise student achievement, but have very different school organizations to manage and develop. Urban, rural, and suburban principals’ work is framed by very different geographic conditions. Younger principals fresh from preparation programs may be well versed in recent research-based approaches and technologies, while more veteran colleagues are working hard to analyze or learn new approaches and to integrate them with past practices. While some professional learning may be appropriate for every developing principal (e.g., briefings on new federal requirements or district expectations), professional development must also specifically target the just-in-time or long-term needs of individuals or small groups of site leaders.

The design of high-quality professional development is complex. It requires that learning activities be clearly aligned with desired learning outcomes and with the degree of change required for the

principal to apply new learning to solve identified issues.<sup>19</sup> This means that professional development must be both individually targeted and also scalable to meet the needs of many or all principals. And, in order for professional development to be viable and sustainable, it must take into consideration such idiosyncratic conditions as time and resources. It is a big challenge, then, for California to develop and sustain a system of effective professional development options that are available and accessible to principals throughout their careers, in every corner of the state, and in every type of school. Certainly no one group or agency can address that challenge. Rather, education leaders must collaborate on the goals, approaches, and resources available for a comprehensive and coherent approach to principal professional development.

### Individual Leadership Development Plans

Collectively, developing, or mid-career, principals represent a range of knowledge and skills, varied experiences, and unique school contexts that result in each one needing differentiated guidance and support to improve his or her leadership performance. A leadership development plan is an organizer for professional learning that ties directly to a principal’s goals as mutually determined by the principal and his or her supervisor. Taking into consideration the principal’s past evaluation results and recommendations, current school targets, and resources available for professional development, the principal and supervisor establish these professional development goals, select activities, identify what will be considered evidence of accomplishment, arrange scheduling and funding, and establish check-in points for feedback and adjustments. These agreements are captured in the leadership development plan and become components of the principal’s annual performance review.

Using a leadership development plan helps a principal clearly understand district expectations, learning targets, and levels of available support specifically related to those targets. From the district’s perspective, such plans enable district supervisors to assess the in-service needs of individual principals and, also, help supervisors to gauge the education and financial results of their investment in principal professional development. Additionally, when a district analyzes the full set of its principals’ individual leadership plans, it can organize and establish group guidance and support for those principals with similar goals. Using leadership development plans helps prevent a fragmented approach to professional learning or, as Darling-Hammond calls it in her comprehensive study, “random acts of professional development.”<sup>20</sup>

### Current Principal Development in California

Compared to California, other states provide a more institutionalized means for supplying school leaders with individualized and collective learning opportunities focused on the improvement of schools and student learning. In California, there are no further requirements for professional development after a principal is fully licensed, and the sole state leadership development program in California is training provided under AB 430.

AB 430 comprises 80 hours of training in three modules (i.e., reading and/or mathematics, management and resource allocation strategies, and technology uses) with 80 hours of practicum. AB 430 training has reached a large share of principals and assistant principals in the state and is sometimes used to satisfy requirements for the Clear credential. While AB 430 is credited with helping principals become more familiar with curriculum and instruction — especially as related to state-approved texts and standards — critics question the brevity and one-size-fits-all nature of this type of training

and the fact that it generally does not include direct mentoring or coaching of principals.<sup>21</sup>

Darling-Hammond and colleagues found that California had a much less-well-developed infrastructure for ongoing professional development than most other states they studied. While other states they examined funded ongoing leadership academies, implemented mentoring or coaching models to support principals, or did both, California discontinued its highly successful California School Leadership Academy in 2003 in the course of state budget cuts. Since that time, California’s education leaders twice were unable to coordinate a competitive proposal for significant foundation support to rebuild a statewide leadership development program. Required state attention on school and district interventions for the lowest performing schools indirectly acknowledged school leadership but, for the most part, did not include targeted or long-term professional development for principals. Continuing budget issues and other state priorities with short timelines have kept focused leadership development off the state’s action agenda.

Professional development for principals has rarely been coordinated or part of systemwide learning in California. Rather, professional learning beyond licensure requirements has more frequently been tied to the latest state initiative or individual district interest and has been applied to all principals regardless of grade-level assignment, geographic location, school size, or personal performance. Support for long-term professional learning for principals has lagged behind teacher professional development. So rather than working with principals in a cohesive system of leadership development, California’s approach has been less organized.

In California, regional and local support providers have carried the load for principal professional

development most frequently. At any one time, there are a variety of professional learning options, including one-day workshops, conferences, coursework, and short-term peer groups that are sponsored by districts, county offices, universities, professional organizations, education laboratories, private companies, or partnerships. A sample (not exhaustive) of available professional development for principals during one period of time showed county offices of education offering AB430 training, while universities initiated new EdD programs, the Association of California School Administrators convened a statewide conference on job-alike groups, an education laboratory presented new research summaries on hot topics, and a private company provided budget training.

While such variety in options might be important for addressing the diverse needs of California principals, and the quality of professional development may be high, there are no data to confirm or reject either conclusion. Furthermore, data regarding coordination among providers and alignment to leadership standards and critical outcomes are not generally collected. To assess the results of professional development for principals, more information on all aspects of leadership content, process, and context is needed.

Cross-organization work is now under way to map what professional development is available for principals in California and to assess how well it matches to leadership standards and other quality criteria. For example, the Integrated Leadership Development Initiative (ILDI), which authored this proposal, conducted an informal assessment of what professional development is available for principals in California and how well it matches to leadership standards. In addition, the Leadership work group of the state's Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee has been given the task of collecting information on principal professional devel-

opment offered by the 58 counties. And, ACSA is updating its professional development catalog and website. When coordinated, these efforts can provide a broad picture of professional learning practices and point to areas in need of expansion or development. In turn, this can provide a strong base for the range of professional developers and support providers to collaborate on transforming current principal professional learning options into a coherent and sustainable system of high-quality professional development.

Additional effort continues around establishing principal coaching as a strategy for ongoing principal development. For example, over the past several years, ACSA has advocated for leadership coaching and partnered with the New Teacher Center to provide training for coaches. ACSA has also continued to refine a model for a principal coaching system and looked for opportunities to move ahead on sponsored legislation. Other proponents of principal coaching have stepped forward. A report issued by county office superintendents, in preparation for the 2007 Year of Education, stated that "A culture of ongoing coaching has been shown to dramatically strengthen the capacity for effective leadership among principals and district/county level administrators..."<sup>22</sup> Principal coaching was also recommended in the 2008 Governor's report.<sup>23</sup> However, even with this consensus, action to enact principal coaching has collapsed.

### **Continuous Improvement: Implications for Action**

To strengthen the *Continuous Improvement* stage in California's principal workforce development effort, the actions identified below are critical.

- \* As part of the principal preparation study (2011), consider instituting ongoing professional development as a requirement for license renewal.
- \* Study existing principal professional development to determine what should be expanded, remodeled,

or eliminated and reallocate funds and/or establish set-asides to support effective programs/approaches.

- \* Convene stakeholders to define “high-quality” professional development, establish quality criteria, and forge agreements to apply CPSEL leadership standards when they design, develop, implement, and assess state and local professional development.
- \* Encourage the use of individualized professional learning plans, with differentiated learning and support activities, by providing models that link professional development to principal evaluation results and improved student achievement.
- \* Establish an accessible and sustainable best practice clearinghouse where members can research innovative and effective practices and search for information on opportunities for high-quality professional development.
- \* Establish face-to-face and web-based options for principals to link with an individual coach, peer network, learning community, or other support services.
- \* Prepare and fund a cadre of coaches to support developing and struggling mid-career principals in achieving improvement goals.
- \* Develop a fundable action plan and collaborative agreements that strengthen and extend existing policies and practices into a solid infrastructure that provides high-quality professional development to the broad range of mid-career principals across the state.

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# Expert Principal

## Expert Principal: Highly Accomplished Practice

Highly accomplished principals are those who exhibit the highest level of performance and successfully lead efforts that result in school improvement and student achievement. The designation of “highly accomplished” denotes a level of expertise judged according to performance level rather than course hours, veteran status, or years of service or seat-time experience. While acknowledging successful principals is not a new practice, extending a standards-based career continuum to include the ongoing development of “highly accomplished” principals is new. Further developing expert principals to become more than “effective,” means pushing their continuous learning into innovations and training and supporting them to work with others, both teachers and other principals, who are coming up the ranks.

### Untangling Terms

Highly accomplished, as used here, is distinct from the *NCLB* requirement for “highly qualified” teachers and principals. Most widely used for teachers, “highly qualified” has meant those who meet licensing requirements. Highly qualified principals are mentioned throughout *NCLB*, but there has not been consensus on the definition. Some suggest mirroring the teacher definition and using certification as the criteria for highly qualified principals. Others suggest that any effort to create a definition for “highly qualified” principals should be based on “high national standards, performance assessments across the range of skills required of accomplished leaders, and a demonstration of effectiveness that includes student achievement outcomes.” This perspective expands “highly qualified” to include assurances that the principal can be effective.

“Highly accomplished” also differs from the term “exemplary principal.” California Senate Bill (SB) 1133, the Quality Education Investment Act of 2006 (QEIA),<sup>2</sup> provides \$3 billion over seven years to 488 low-performing schools for the purpose of closing the achievement gap. Eligible schools are those that ranked in the lowest two deciles of the state’s 2005 Academic Performance Index. As part of QEIA, participating districts are required to affirm that their QEIA schools are being led by “exemplary principals.” Guidelines for determining “exemplary principals” were developed by the Integrated Leadership Development Initiative (ILDI) in 2008.<sup>3</sup> While QEIA’s “exemplary principals” may be highly accomplished, and highly accomplished principals may be serving as “exemplary principals” in QEIA schools, the terms are not necessarily the same.

“Highly accomplished” is most widely known as a designation from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for teachers that successfully complete a rigorous set of assessments and are certified as experts by subject area and grade span. NBPTS has recently initiated the design of a similar system for administrators.

Finally, in California, many school districts, universities, and support providers use the “Descriptions of Practice” (DOP)<sup>4</sup> for the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL)<sup>5</sup> as a means to identify leadership performance that exceeds the standard, in effect, “highly accomplished” practice. To develop this career stage, more discussion is needed to reach consensus on how to define, measure, and reward highly accomplished principals.

### Why Highly Accomplished Is Important

Challenges in the principal position — among them, wide-ranging student needs, diverse communities, maturing staffs, new technologies, emerging research on what works, demands to prepare for the future — require continuous learning and support systems able to sustain and retain the most skilled leaders. Thus, the designation and support of highly accomplished principals is an important segment in a principal’s development continuum and in the California principal pipeline.

The designation “highly accomplished,” at the far end of the leadership development continuum, sets both a challenging goal for those seeking to be the best at what they do and an agenda for those seeking to support them. It provides a marker for recognizing and rewarding those who have gone beyond what is expected for effective practice. And, for those considering joining the principal ranks, it establishes that the job not only is doable, and at a high level, but also is highly valued.

There must be a statewide effort, then, to establish opportunities for expert principals to be identified and recognized, as a means both for retaining the most expert leaders in the K–12 system and for attracting teacher leaders to the principalship. To do this, ongoing professional learning for highly accomplished principals must include ways to invigorate and motivate them to stay on the job as long as possible and, also, to enable them to capture their knowledge and pass it along before they retire. In addition, meaningful recognition for effort and accomplishment while still on the job may move the most expert principals to work as mentors or coaches even after they leave.

### Advanced Certification

Advanced Certification can serve as a path to recognize expert practice. Discussions in California have raised the idea of creating a “third tier” for the administrative credential as a means to acknowledge accomplished practice. While some see this as an important way to support and encourage expert administrator practice, others are reluctant to add more complexity and what might be perceived as hurdles to the licensing system. One complexity of this approach, for example, is that the current credential authorizes not only principals, but also other licensed administrative positions.

Nationally, there is energy around having an official designation for highly accomplished principals. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is already developing a new program, Advanced Principal Certification (APC). Well known for providing advanced teacher certification, NBPTS suggests that establishing a national system for advanced principal certification would clarify the skills, knowledge, and achievements that set highly qualified principals apart from peers with minimal credentials. They posit that such a designation could attract more people to the job by letting



them know that their expertise will be recognized. The NBPTS program is scheduled to begin in 2011. In addition to this initiative, a few states also offer the option of advanced licensing, or certification, including that of Turnaround Specialist. However, no studies have yet been done on actual effects on principal retention, recruitment, or school improvement results.

### **Extended Opportunities for Highly Accomplished Principals**

Specific guidance for professional development tailored to highly accomplished principals is not yet well established. Professional development standards outlined by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC)<sup>6</sup> broadly present quality criteria for the content, process, and context of all professional learning. Examples of advanced professional development opportunities or recognition and incentive programs for accomplished principals have been initiated in several states, many through the Wallace Foundation's leadership initiatives. And, as noted earlier, the NBPTS is beginning work in this area. However, others have found it difficult to imagine what extended opportunities for expert principals might look like.

In California, the vision of advanced learning or incentives for accomplished principals is not yet clear. For example, in June 2007, the ILDI convened a group of highly accomplished administrators to serve as a focus group on the issue. Participants included veteran principals recognized as successful by districts and associations. Discussions were framed to identify two things: 1) professional learning opportunities directed specifically toward experienced high performers and 2) potential incentives and rewards to recruit and retain the best and brightest. These focus group participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of a range of coaching opportunities for experienced administrators,

including receiving coaching for specified challenges or to extend skills, being trained as a coach, and providing coaching to those coming into the profession. However, participants had difficulty identifying specific rewards that would be seen as valuable by the broad range of administrators in the state. While these principals had very clear opinions about, and could offer very clear examples of, levels of performance, measures of accomplishment, support activities, and rewards and incentives for teachers, when it came to thinking through these same issues as they relate to principals, they had difficulty.

The ILDI also surveyed a sample of agencies that provide a significant amount of principal professional development in California — county offices, professional organizations, large school districts and others — to determine the status of current professional development available to all principals. Responses were mapped by various categories, including the five career stages on the principal development continuum. Results indicated that there was no significant effort in the state specifically targeting “highly accomplished” principals other than links to advanced university study for the EdD in Education Leadership.

### **Examples of Professional Learning for Expert Principals**

Several types of professional learning can be useful for highly accomplished principals. Some require additional resources; others use or organize resources more effectively or in new ways.

- \* Advanced learning can stretch accomplished principals so they gain knowledge and insights outside of their current repertoire that can be applied in their own leadership work. For example, they might build additional capacity by enrolling in advanced subject-matter courses at a university, shadowing a community partner to learn about emerging technology solutions, linking with a

specialty coach on a school-based project, interning in a research or policy organization, serving as an adjunct instructor at a different grade level or in a community different from their own, or volunteering in a professional organization or a nonprofit organization that serves schools.

- \* Specialized training is another way accomplished principals can “drill down” in already skillful practices and hone them to effectively work with others in challenging situations. Principals might learn additional skills while engaging in training and then apprenticing with an experienced principal mentor, a leadership coach, or a turnaround specialist.
- \* Networking with other accomplished peers creates a specialized learning community, offering the same positive results that research ascribes to other learning communities. If the number of expert-level principals in any one district is too limited, creating a network might require making links across district lines. Peer coaching and innovative discussions can occur among expert principals who are, in fact, peers and can stretch skilled leaders in ways that are directly related to on-the-job challenges. The extended peer networks can be convened by regional support providers, district consortia, or web-based technologies.

### Incentives for Accomplished Principals

For some, intrinsic rewards or additional learning opportunities are incentives for entering or remaining on the job. Others find more structured acknowledgments and external rewards motivating and important to job satisfaction.

Recognition awards are fairly standard in education. Some critics see these as unimportant because they are based on “politics” or on a cycle of “whose turn is next.” However, acknowledgment of principal performance based on widely accepted leadership standards provides meaningful, differentiated, and specific recognition. When based on standards and/or program effect, the rationale for recognition more likely fits with district- and statewide goals and

links strong leadership with school improvement and student achievement. Focusing and aligning the existing set of administrator awards offered by state, regional and local agencies and organizations is a way of using existing resources to acknowledge expert practice and to reinforce what “highly accomplished” really means in practice.

Pay for Performance is currently one of the most hotly debated strategies for principal recruitment and retention and for attracting exemplary principals to serve in the neediest schools. Several other states have studied performance pay for principals, with only a few such programs implemented beyond a pilot program. Those seem to center on providing incentives in a process that recruits, trains, and places expert principals to take over chronically underperforming schools.

In California, discussion about performance pay has occurred chiefly in school improvement centers, committee meetings, or task forces. The Governor’s Committee on Education Excellence, *Students First – Renewing Hope for CA’s Future* (November 2007) recommends providing ongoing professional development, fair action-oriented evaluations, and compensation based on performance, including additional incentive pay for principals who demonstrate effectiveness and lead in schools that serve high concentrations of low-income and minority students.<sup>7</sup>

Salary schedule adjustments or pay for extra duties are two other options for using pay as an incentive. Many times, the hourly rate represented on the principal salary schedule is the same or less than that for a teacher with only a few years experience. Yet, for many principals, additional certification requirements and job expectations warrant greater compensation. Teacher leaders have reported that the lack of a significant pay differential between teachers and principals is a barrier to considering becoming a principal. Also, the principal’s work fre-

quently extends beyond a traditional workday or their contracted work year. Traditionally, there is no salary adjustment as this practice is considered doing what is necessary. Some, however, believe that adopting a frequently used practice for teachers that adds a stipend for work outside the usual scope of work might be more fair and also serve as a salary incentive.

Recognition of “highly accomplished” in the principal development continuum would raise the status of the principal role. Demonstrating the achievement of expert practice can be a key strategy for both attracting and also retaining the best and brightest educators as principals. Whether through standards-based awards, advanced learning opportunities, expert networks, salary adjustments, or other means, established incentives underscore the value of continuous learning and effort in not only meeting, but also exceeding expectations for expert leadership. Although this recognition of expert practice has been recommended in state task force reports, California has not yet picked up on the design and development of an incentive strategy for “highly accomplished” principals.

### Highly Accomplished Practice: Implications for Action

To strengthen the *Highly Accomplished Practice* stage in California’s principal workforce development effort, the actions identified below are critical.

- \* Identify existing recognition programs and awards for principals and align them to leadership standards and program effectiveness, acknowledging and/or differentiating “highly accomplished” principals.
- \* Coordinate awards among partners to ensure that there are some for “highly accomplished” principals.
- \* Study and/or participate in NBPTS advanced certification program for principals in California.

- \* Sponsor focus groups, a think tank, and/or research on incentive and reward systems for principals, including the effect of such systems on principal recruitment, retention, and cost.
- \* Develop and implement initiatives to promote the retention of highly effective principals, particularly within those elementary, middle, and high schools with a high percentage of low-achieving students.

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1 Aguerrebere, J., Houston, P., & Tirozzi, G. (2007, December 10). Toward the “highly qualified” principal: Getting serious about leadership — how states can build leadership systems. *EdWeek*, 27, 15, 28, 36. Retrieved December 10, 2009, from ASCD Smart Brief.

2 SB 1133 established the Quality Education Investment Act of 2006 for the purpose of implementing the Proposition 98 settlement agreement between the California Teachers Association et al. v. Schwarzenegger et al.

3 Integrated Leadership Development Initiative. (2008, May). *Guidance for the selection and support of exemplary principals under the Quality Education Investment Act*. Retrieved January 2009, from [http://www.qeia.org/documents/wr\\_2008-06-19.11.21.25\\_3.pdf](http://www.qeia.org/documents/wr_2008-06-19.11.21.25_3.pdf) and <http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/894>.

4 WestEd. (2003). *Moving leadership standards into everyday work: Descriptions of practice*. San Francisco: Author. Retrieved January 4, 2009, from [www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/688](http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/688).

5 California School Leadership Academy at WestEd and the Association of California School Administrators. (2000). *California professional standards for education leaders*. Oakland, CA: Authors. Retrieved January 4, 2009, from <http://www.acsa.org/MainMenuCategories/.../CPSELS.aspx> and <http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/867>.

6 National Staff Development Council. (2001). *Standards for staff development*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved August 12, 2009, from <http://www.nsdc.org/standards>.

7 Governor’s Committee on Education Excellence. (2007, November). *Students first: Renewing hope for California’s future*. Sacramento, CA: Author. Online summary retrieved January 4, 2009, at [www.edsource.org/assets/files/gcee/GCEE\\_ExeSumm\\_2008.pdf](http://www.edsource.org/assets/files/gcee/GCEE_ExeSumm_2008.pdf).



# Conclusion

To gain ground in school improvement, quality principals are required. Specific California-focused reports and research studies point to policies and practices needed to strengthen principal development and to ensure that a quality principal is placed and retained in every school. Yet, while there is consensus on the importance of an effective principal in leading and sustaining program improvement, teacher effectiveness, and student learning, California's recent investment in school leadership development has been minimal. Little concerted effort has been made to pull together a coherent system of high-quality and sustained school leadership preparation, and sustained development, and support.

This document, *Effective Principals for California Schools – Building a Coherent Leadership Development System*, has presented next-step actions critical to changing the policies and practices needed for a systemic approach to leadership development and, thus, most likely to increase the supply of high-quality school and district leaders. “Implications for action” have been outlined for each stage of principal development, but taken as a whole, these implications center on the following few key concepts.

## Data Collection and Research

To make the significant changes required to build a coherent system of leader development, stakeholders must start with a clear picture of what currently exists. State and local efforts should be organized to collect information about what is actually happening with administrator recruitment, preparation, assignment practices, and retention. Then, California's research agenda for leadership must move beyond mere data collection to examine the effectiveness and impact of these programs, practices, and people on the overall

goal of increased student achievement. Attention to existing information and gaps at every level of principal development requires state leaders to coordinate data collection and research activities among state and local agencies, universities, research organizations and other stakeholders and to disseminate results to those working to improve policies and practice.

## Standards of Principal Quality

The California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL), adapted by California

education leaders from national leadership standards, provide broad definition to a statewide understanding of principal effectiveness. The CPSEL can serve as an organizer for the complexity inherent in a multidimensional system of principal development and support. While holding steady the quality criteria required in a rigorous system, the CPSEL also allow for the differentiation required to meet administrator needs at various career stages and in various work contexts. As stakeholders increasingly value and incorporate the CPSEL into their leadership development efforts, they are better able to align and assess development activities with the overall goal of enhanced teacher effectiveness and student learning.

### **Coordinated and Articulated Professional Development**

No single agency or organization has the capacity to provide the full range and quality of professional development needed by the state's principals. Limited resources targeted toward school and district leadership means that professional development must be planned well. Thus, in order to consistently provide high-quality professional learning throughout every principal's career, stakeholders need to coordinate learning opportunities that are designed and delivered for maximum impact across the continuum of principal development. This coordination entails such key activities as identifying effective professional development options available to principals, training facilitators, warehousing resources, and preparing leadership coaches. Taken together, these collaborative efforts increase the likelihood that school leaders have access to the information or learning they need when they need it.

### **Collaborative and Sustained Action**

Collaborative action among stakeholders is a critical component in enabling a comprehensive and cohesive system of leader development. In fact, cooperative effort is required to put any aspect of this plan into action. Required, too, is a relentless focus and sustained effort, whether in research, policy, or practice, or at the state, regional, or local level. Collaborative and ongoing work is the only way to build and maintain a coherent leadership development system.

*Effective Principals for California Schools – Building a Coherent Leadership Development System* moves ideas from a series of conversations, task force reports, and briefings into a coordinated work force development initiative that, when implemented, will ensure that we get the right people into the right jobs, to effectively do the right work at the right time.

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# Appendix A

## Appendix A: California Professional Standards for Education Leaders

### Standard 1

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

- \* Facilitate the development of a shared vision for the achievement of all students based upon data from multiple measures of student learning and relevant qualitative indicators.
- \* Communicate the shared vision so the entire school community understands and acts on the school's mission to become a standards-based education system.
- \* Use the influence of diversity to improve teaching and learning.
- \* Identify and address any barriers to accomplishing the vision.
- \* Shape school programs, plans, and activities to ensure that they are integrated, articulated through the grades, and consistent with the vision.
- \* Leverage and marshal sufficient resources, including technology, to implement and attain the vision for all students and all subgroups of students.

### Standard 2

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

- \* Shape a culture in which high expectations are the norm for each student as evident in rigorous academic work.
- \* Promote equity, fairness, and respect among all members of the school community.
- \* Facilitate the use of a variety of appropriate content-based learning materials and learning strategies that recognize students as active learners, value reflection and inquiry, emphasize the quality versus the amount of student application and performance, and utilize appropriate and effective technology.
- \* Guide and support the long-term professional development of all staff consistent with the ongoing effort to improve the learning of all students relative to the content standards.
- \* Provide opportunities for all members of the school community to develop and use skills in collaboration, distributed leadership, and shared responsibility.
- \* Create an accountability system grounded in standards-based teaching and learning.
- \* Utilize multiple assessments to evaluate student learning in an ongoing process focused on improving the academic performance of each student.

### Standard 3

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

- \* Sustain a safe, efficient, clean, well-maintained, and productive school environment that nurtures student learning and supports the professional growth of teachers and support staff.
- \* Utilize effective and nurturing practices in establishing student behavior management systems.
- \* Establish school structures and processes that support student learning.
- \* Utilize effective systems management, organizational development, and problem-solving and decision-making techniques.
- \* Align fiscal, human, and material resources to support the learning of all subgroups of students.
- \* Monitor and evaluate the program and staff.
- \* Manage legal and contractual agreements and records in ways that foster a professional work environment and secure privacy and confidentiality for all students and staff.

### Standard 4

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

- \* Recognize and respect the goals and aspirations of diverse family and community groups.
- \* Treat diverse community stakeholder groups with fairness and respect.
- \* Incorporate information about family and community expectations into school decision-making and activities.

- \* Strengthen the school through the establishment of community, business, institutional, and civic partnerships.
- \* Communicate information about the school on a regular and predictable basis through a variety of media.
- \* Support the equitable success of all students and all subgroups of students by mobilizing and leveraging community support services.

### Standard 5

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by modeling a personal code of ethics and developing professional leadership capacity.

- \* Model personal and professional ethics, integrity, justice, and fairness, and expect the same behaviors from others.
- \* Protect the rights and confidentiality of students and staff.
- \* Use the influence of office to enhance the educational program, not personal gain.
- \* Make and communicate decisions based upon relevant data and research about effective teaching and learning, leadership, management practices, and equity.
- \* Demonstrate knowledge of the standards-based curriculum and the ability to integrate and articulate programs throughout the grades.
- \* Demonstrate skills in decision-making, problem solving, change management, planning, conflict management, and evaluation.
- \* Reflect on personal leadership practices and recognize their impact and influence on the performance of others.
- \* Engage in professional and personal development.
- \* Encourage and inspire others to higher levels of performance, commitment, and motivation.
- \* Sustain personal motivation, commitment, energy, and health by balancing professional and personal responsibilities.

## Standard 6

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

- \* Work with the governing board and district and local leaders to influence policies that benefit students and support the improvement of teaching and learning.
- \* Influence and support public policies that ensure the equitable distribution of resources and support for all subgroups of students.
- \* Ensure that the school operates consistently within the parameters of federal, state, and local laws, policies, regulations, and statutory requirements.
- \* Generate support for the school by two-way communication with key decision-makers in the school community.
- \* Collect and report accurate records of school performance.
- \* View oneself as a leader of a team and also as a member of a larger team.
- \* Open the school to the public and welcome and facilitate constructive conversations about how to improve student learning and achievement.





# Appendix B

## **Appendix B: Descriptions of Practice (example)**

### **Create and Utilize Accountability Systems**

A key component of an effective standards-based program is an accountability system that supports educators' efforts to make sure all students perform at high academic levels. An accountability system establishes the means by which a school can specify and monitor progress in reaching its desired teaching and learning outcomes.

Administrators recognize that effective accountability processes rely on more than one measure of student learning and on more than just standardized measures. Successful leaders ensure that their school is organized around state and district academic standards, accountability tools, and assessments. At the same time, they focus site efforts on the development and use of an array of internal accountability strategies aimed at building the organization's capacity to achieve its goals. Effective administrators work collaboratively with individuals and groups, both within the school and in the broader community, to identify expectations for teaching and learning that are based on state content standards and the school vision.

Capable site leaders have a deep understanding of student assessment. They are knowledgeable about the strengths and limitations of various assessment

tools and techniques and are skilled at interpreting assessment data. They work with teachers individually and collectively to clarify desired instructional outcomes and identify multiple strategies by which students' progress toward these goals can be determined. With staff, leaders facilitate ongoing dialogue about the evidence needed for determining the degree to which students are learning. They engage faculty in examining student work to help develop a shared understanding and consensus around matters of achievement and, therefore, accountability. Effective leaders hold themselves accountable on matters of equity, including closing the achievement gap between subgroups of students.

Effective school administrators emphasize the value of formative assessment in monitoring student learning. Both formally and informally, and sometimes using technology, they facilitate teachers' engagement in regular reviews of evidence of student learning so that evidence is used consistently to plan and adjust instruction.

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<p><b>Practice that is directed toward the standard</b></p>	<p>The administrator ensures compliance with state and district accountability procedures. She or he discusses data from these procedures with staff to identify areas for improvement. The administrator periodically reviews student learning data with teachers individually and in groups.</p>
<p><b>Practice that approaches the standard</b></p>	<p>The administrator works with staff to clarify learning expectations and to use student data to monitor and assess achievement of goals. She or he facilitates individual and collective dialogue with staff to inculcate high expectations and a sense of professional responsibility for student achievement. She or he ensures compliance with state and district accountability procedures.</p>
<p><b>Practice that meets the standard</b></p>	<p>The school leader works collaboratively with all members of the professional staff to identify and implement assessment strategies that support continuous improvement of all students to high standards of learning based on content and performance standards. The leader ensures that these strategies incorporate accurate and appropriate data about teaching and learning. She or he supports staff in using technology as part of the analysis process and in aligning professional growth goals with assessment data.</p>
<p><b>Practice that exemplifies the standard</b></p>	<p>The school leader facilitates the development of school-wide commitment to multiple measures of student learning, regular assessment of progress, and use of assessment data to guide teaching and learning. She or he ensures that the site's accountability strategies focus on the achievement of all students to high academic levels and on closing the achievement gap between subgroups of students. The leader actively promotes the goal of improving schoolwide, standards-based instructional capacity as an essential component of accountability.</p>

# Appendix C

## Appendix C: Integrated Leadership Development Initiative

The Integrated Leadership Development Initiative (ILDI) is a collaborative of education agencies and organizations focused on developing effective school and district leadership in California. The California Comprehensive Center supports the facilitation of ILDI; member agencies and organizations support their representatives.

The following are/were members of ILDI who participated in the discussion and development of the workforce plan:

### California Department of Education (CDE)

- \* Sue Stickel
- \* Tony Monreal
- \* Deb Sigman

### Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC)

- \* Larry Birch
- \* Jo Birdsell

### County Offices of Education, Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee (CSESA/CISC)

- \* Sue Stickel
- \* Henry Mothner
- \* Carol Johansen
- \* Nancy Giberson

### Association of California School Administrators (ACSA)

- \* George Manthey
- \* Kathy McCreery
- \* Linda Wisher
- \* Mike Bossi

### Universities, California Association of Professors of Education Administration (CAPEA)

- \* Gary Kinsey
- \* Chris Thomas
- \* Paul Beare

### Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (CFTL)

- \* Diane Siri

### WestEd, California Comprehensive Center (CACC)

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- \* Karen Kearney
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