

## **Leader Preparation Programs' Initial Responses to the California Administrator Performance Assessment**

Alejandro Gonzalez Ojeda  
*San Diego State University*

James M. Marshall  
*San Diego State University*

Douglas Fisher  
*San Diego State University*

### **Abstract**

*In 2013, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) approved the implementation of a performance assessment for all preliminary services credential candidates. The result is what is now known as the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA). Consisting of three sub-assessments, prospective administrators will need to successfully complete and pass the CalAPA. In this article, we provide background information about the CalAPA, present an example of one university's response to this opportunity to increase the rigor of its program, and describe an introductory CalAPA two-day workshop. Additionally, we share the early perspectives of programs and their initial responses to the CalAPA.*

*Keywords:* performance assessment, leadership development, California, university principal preparation, administration

### **Acknowledgements**

This work has been supported, in part, by The Wallace Foundation's University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI).

## Introduction

The need for well-prepared, school-ready school leaders has never been greater. Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) describe the significant impact a leader has on both teacher performance and student achievement. The majority of states have established certification programs that require candidates to complete an accredited leadership preparation program. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) requires candidates to possess five years of teaching (or school counseling, nursing, etc.) experience and complete a preparation program curriculum in order to be awarded the preliminary administrative services credential. This Tier 1 credential qualifies the individual to begin employment in a school administrator position. With employment, the leader is eligible to begin the Tier 2 clear credential process.

Faced with an increasing need for school leaders, coupled with significant numbers of low-performing schools across the state, the CTC established a multi-year plan to increase the rigor of Tier 1 credentialing. The central focus became what is now known as the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA). Consisting of three cycles, prospective administrators will need to pass this performance assessment as part of their Tier 1 credential. Candidates must demonstrate their competence in the following three areas: 1) analyzing data to inform school improvement; 2) facilitating collaborative professional learning to improve teaching and learning; and 3) coaching an individual teacher to improve teaching and learning.

The addition of the CalAPA is a sea change in the preparation of California's next generation of school leaders, and one which will necessarily impact the entire system. From candidates and the districts from which they come to university, district, and county offices of education that provide administrator preparation programs, each constituency is becoming increasingly aware of the CalAPA requirements and is under pressure to determine how to respond.

In this article, we summarize the background of the CalAPA and its genesis, provide an example of one university's response to this opportunity for increasing the rigor of its preparation program, and describe the introductory CalAPA two-day workshop. Additionally, we share the early perspectives of programs and their initial programmatic responses to the CalAPA prior to and following the two-day introductory workshop.

## Background

We draw on the extensive work of Orr and Orphanos (2011), who suggest that there is evidence linking exemplary leadership preparation programs to leaders' knowledge of effective leadership, as well as their ability to apply that knowledge to their practice. A key term in this assertion is *exemplary*. Orr and Orphanos (2011) define exemplary program models as those that are based on seven elements to disseminate effective preparation practices (Table 1). Literature on preparation programs highlights the importance of increasing rigor to provide authentic preparation experiences to administrative candidates.

Table 1

*Elements of Exemplary Leadership Preparation Programs*

1. A well-defined theory of leadership for school improvement that frames and integrates the program features around a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge
2. A coherent curriculum that addresses effective instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management and that aligns with state and professional standards
3. Active learning strategies that integrate theory and practice and stimulate reflection
4. Quality internships that provide intensive developmental opportunities to apply leadership knowledge and skills under the guidance of an expert practitioner–mentor
5. Knowledgeable (about their subject matter) faculty
6. Social and professional support, including organizing students into cohorts that take common courses together in a prescribed sequence, formalized mentoring, and advising from expert principals
7. The use of standards-based assessments for candidate and program feedback and continuous improvement that are tied to the program vision and objectives

(Orr & Orphanos, 2011, p. 22)

## **Recruitment and Placement Practices**

Orr, Silverberg, and LeTendre (2006) have found that in cases where innovative elements such as these were well implemented, the programs produced positive and notably greater outcomes when compared to programs where such elements were limited or absent. Part of what a program should accomplish through knowledge and practice is instilling the necessary confidence in aspiring leaders to lead a school site with purpose. A leader's purposefulness and confidence in their disposition are illustrated by a shift in their role and responsibilities as a principal. This shift signals a principal's moving away from simply managing regulatory or compliance tasks, and toward a focus on being an instructional leader who fosters growth among students and educators (Stewart, 2013). If programs frame quality leadership in terms of fiscal, operational, and instructional knowledge, as well as emphasizing the value of personal and professional growth among staff and communities, then programs may be forced to think differently about their own practices when it comes to candidate induction and assessment.

In their nationwide review of nonprofit and for-profit, and conventional and innovative principal preparation programs, Hess and Kelly (2005) identify two key practices that program providers should reconsider to effect changes in quality: recruitment practices and candidate internships. The authors suggest that principal preparation programs should consider going beyond immediate candidates and attract outside talent. They encourage programs to be more selective and identify masterful teachers or individuals that possess promising leadership characteristics but may not otherwise consider going into leadership themselves. Expanding the pool of talent allows programs to innovate otherwise stagnant recruitment practices, by attracting non-traditional candidates to support diverse needs of urban leadership, language diversity, and rural education (Hess & Kelly, 2005). Talent scouting is not a new practice, at least not in the private sector. It is common in sports, as competitive teams recognize the value of acquiring talent outside of their immediate region to build strength where needed. The same goes for the field of technology, where companies seek candidates to improve their own initiatives. Of course, what administrative preparation programs have to bargain with is different from these two examples. The premise remains that widening the candidacy pool and being more selective can improve

the quality of both candidates and the program's output. This approach may pose challenges for institutions with lax enrollment practices and those that must meet certain enrollment rates. For these institutions, the CalAPA's rigor and its disclosure of candidate pass rates may prove to be motivators for program redesign.

Hess and Kelly's (2005) work also highlights practices in fieldwork or internship experiences, suggesting that principal preparation programs need to do much more than simply increase internship hours or shift to a cohort model. Districts have a significant role in facilitating fieldwork placements by recommending model leaders in their schools. Jointly designing placements that provide authentic leadership experiences to candidates requires honest and open communication between preparation programs and districts.

If in the continuum of an administrative candidate's preparation we have recruitment on one end, course and fieldwork in the middle, and the goal of successful job placement at the other end, perhaps right before the latter is the most critical piece, assessment of competencies. Prior to the CalAPA, culminating assessments for programs in California may have looked different from one program to another. Orr and Orphanos's (2011) list of elements culminates with standards-based assessments for candidates, with feedback loops for programs. A program's ability to effectively evaluate a candidate's readiness to enter the field of leadership and assume the role of a principal is dependent on the quality of both the methods and measures used to assess competencies taught and practiced throughout the program. Performance assessments that are aligned to standards can help address these issues.

### **Performance Assessments to Demonstrate Entry-Level Competency**

Preparation programs must take a close look at the critical components of their course sequence, the support structures that are in place for candidates, and the manner in which leadership competence is assessed. A shift in how candidates are assessed is timely and something that researchers have called for. Advocates of reform for leadership preparation programs have pointed to performance assessments as a reliable method for licensure programs to consider.

A review of policies and data gaps pertaining to effective school leadership (Briggs, Cheney, Davis, & Moll, 2013) identifies performance assessments as an approach that should be part of principal preparation

programs. A change of this magnitude reminds us that an administrative preparation program's success should not be defined by its passing rate, but rather by the quality of leadership dispositions, skills, and experiences that it disseminates and provides to its candidates so that they may be better prepared to do the work needed in their communities. Researchers have suggested that authentic performance-based assessments can be good indicators of a candidate's competence and ability to lead (Linn, Baker, & Dunbar, 1991; Orr et al., 2017). What each advocate recommendation points to is the need for rigorous assessments to determine a candidate's competence, something that the CalAPA is specifically designed to address.

### **Similar Efforts**

A preparation program's process for recommending an administrative candidate for licensure may consist of successful completion of the program's course sequence, completion of externship or fieldwork experience measured in hours, passing an exit exam or a form of culminating assessment, and in some cases development of a signature assignment such as a portfolio. Not yet common, however, is the use of performance-based assessments.

Some states—like Indiana, for example—require candidates to successfully pass the Praxis exam, a proctored computer-based exam which consists of 65 multiple choice questions and a constructed response (Indiana CORE Assessments for Educator Licensure, 2018). There is, however, a significant effort toward performance-based assessments as part of the administrative licensure track. In 2012, Massachusetts developed the Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL), the purpose of which is to assess the leadership competencies of administrative candidates seeking licensure (Orr et al., 2017). Candidates seeking an initial administrative licensure must demonstrate competency for each of the following four tasks:

- Task 1 - Leadership through a Vision for High Student Achievement
- Task 2 - Instructional Leadership for a Professional Learning Culture
- Task 3 - Leadership in Observing, Assessing, and Supporting Individual Teacher Effectiveness

#### Task 4 - Leadership for Family Engagement and Community Involvement (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MDESE], 2017)

PAL is the first of its kind to be validated and studied for reliability and serves as an example of an innovative assessment of a candidate's readiness for administrative licensure (Orr et al., 2017). Following this example, California's CalAPA initiative embraces performance assessments as a promising practice to evaluate future leaders.

### **California's Response to Assessing Administrative Candidates**

The CTC allows for two paths to earn a preliminary credential: 1) an accredited professional preparation program or 2) a state-approved alternative examination. The Cal-APA applies to people in the former category and not to those who earn a credential by the test option. There is not an assessment required for candidates to clear their credentials.

Due to concerns with the effectiveness of school administrators' ability to meet the demands of the complex needs of California's public schools in the 21st century, the CTC approved implementing a performance assessment for all preliminary services credential candidates in 2013. In 2015, the Budget Act was passed and provided the necessary funding for the development of an administrator performance assessment. The CTC then drafted the California Administrative Performance Assessment Design Standards and the Preliminary Administrator Preparation Program Implementation Standards, presented them to various stakeholder groups, and highlighted their alignment with the already established California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPEs) and California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSELs).

The resulting CalAPA is intended to provide both a summative assessment of candidate administrative ability and a formative framework to guide and develop candidate competence as the candidate engages in the process (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CTC], 2017). It is only the second statewide administrator performance assessment to be established, following the Massachusetts PAL.

The CalAPA's required tasks are both complex and rigorous. As a result, most programs that prepare administrative credential candidates will need to adjust their programs to match the requirements and expected outcomes of the CalAPA. The scope of CalAPA encompasses three cycles of inquiry to measure aspects of candidate performance (Table 2). Detailed

rubrics exist for each of the performance assessments, which will be scored by local administrators and professors, who themselves hold administrative services credentials, under the direction, training, and calibration of the CTC. The CTC selected Pearson to administer the assessment given that this company administers the state’s teacher performance assessment. However, Pearson did not design the assessment. Rather, a design team made up of educational leaders in collaboration with CTC staff developed the assessment, which was then piloted and field-tested by administrative services credential programs across the state.

Table 2  
*CalAPA Leadership Cycles and Descriptions*

<p><b>Cycle 1:</b>  Analyzing Data to Inform School Improvement and Promote Equity</p>
<p>Analyze multiple sources of school site/district data for the purpose of identifying equity gaps, and their potential causal factors, to inform an initial draft plan addressing a problem statement centered on equitable improvement in line with the school’s vision and mission. At the conclusion of this leadership cycle, candidates will reflect on their capacity to analyze data to inform school improvement and promote equity for all students.</p>
<p><b>Cycle 2:</b>  Facilitating Communities of Practice</p>
<p>Facilitate collaborative professional learning within a community of practice for the purpose of improving teaching and student learning through an identified evidence-based strategy. Candidates will reflect on how their facilitation supports the group to address the problem of practice, and how candidates responded to the group’s feedback on their facilitation and on their ability to support the professional learning of the community of practice.</p>
<p><b>Cycle 3:</b>  Supporting Teacher Growth</p>



Candidates will coach an individual teacher to improve teaching and learning. Candidates will familiarize themselves with coaching and observation practices at the school and conduct a full coaching cycle. Throughout this leadership cycle, candidates will reflect on their strengths and areas for professional growth as a coach and leader.

(CTC, 2017)

### **Phased Implementation**

Designing and implementing a performance assessment to innovate the credentialing process is an ambitious undertaking. It requires a concerted effort between the commission and key stakeholders to provide input to authenticate the alignment of the assessment's components with the goal of reaching a well-designed assessment that accurately measures a candidate's competence. With this in mind, the CTC developed a strategic implementation plan involving a phased rollout. Each phase focuses on a critical piece of development, testing, and evaluative measures.

Several phases have been completed to date. The adoption of administrative performance assessment design standards, a validity study of the CAPEs, the adoption of these expectations by the CTC, and the development of assessment and scoring rubrics were all completed in 2016. In the spring of 2017, a pilot test of the performance assessment was conducted. Currently, the CTC is administering and monitoring the field-test phase, which finished in the spring of 2018. The field-test phase includes a group of commission-approved administrator preparation programs that will contribute feedback from faculty and administrator candidates based on their interactions with the cycles and rubrics as they are currently implemented. Field-test scores will be non-consequential and scores will not be disclosed by the CTC. It will still be the responsibility of the preparation program to provide a grade or credit to the candidate for their participation.

There are two remaining phases of the operational administration of the CalAPA. The first general rollout to all preparation programs will begin in the fall of 2018. While all administrative candidates must participate in the CalAPA and submit all three cycles for scoring, this will be a non-consequential year. Scores will not count against candidates, but they will be released to universities and candidates. The second and final operational phase will be implemented in 2019. All candidates that enroll

in an administrative credentialing program on or after July 1, 2019 will need to successfully complete the three cycles of the CalAPA with passing scores in order to obtain licensure.

### **One Preparation Program’s Efforts**

San Diego State University’s (SDSU) Tier 1 administrative services program has undergone an extensive assessment and redesign to better respond to the California Administrator Performance Expectations, as well as the key standards defined via CalAPA. This intensive effort has leveraged existing relationships with key districts in San Diego County as partners in redesign, which reflects their roles as the university’s “customers” that go on to employ the candidates the program produces.

The effort began in the fall of 2016 with a review and gap analysis of the existing program’s strengths and limitations. Using the Quality Measures tools developed by the Education Development Center (EDC), faculty and district partners reviewed the existing program’s scope and full range of objectives. A detailed needs assessment, followed by an initial review of the program’s 12 courses, was conducted. Course redesign and revisions followed. Each resulting course was then piloted in sequence during the 2017-18 academic year, and a detailed assessment of the revised courses was conducted. Table 3 summarizes this redesign effort.

Table 3  
*Program Assessment and Redesign Process*

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Process</b>
Fact-Finding, Needs Assessment, and Gap Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess program strengths and opportunities using Quality Measures</li> <li>- Analyze gaps in standards: Standards vs. Practice, CalAPA-assessed skills</li> <li>- Review articulation among CAPE standards, CalAPA-assessed tasks, and existing course objectives</li> <li>- Engage district partners regarding currently unmet, and anticipated, future</li> </ul>

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Process</b>
	leadership needs
Program Redesign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluate and update course content</li> <li>- Review and redesign assessments in preparation for CalAPA</li> <li>- Align coursework with clinical experiences and CalAPA</li> <li>- Review and redesign course syllabi, using an iterative design process</li> </ul>
Pilot Revised Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement revised courses</li> <li>- Collect formative course performance data to include student work samples, course evaluations, instructor reflection, and peer review</li> </ul>
Review/Revise Piloted Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convene review team following implementation of each course</li> <li>- Review formative course performance data with instructor and design team</li> <li>- Conduct gap analysis between stated course content and outcomes, and implemented course content and outcomes realized</li> <li>- Revise course and syllabus as necessary</li> </ul>

It must be noted that the redesign work is both iterative and perpetual. Courses are reviewed at their conclusion each time they are taught and updated based on specific data points that include the instructor’s reflection, an analysis of student evaluations and student work product, and a comparison of the syllabus to the actual course implementation.

## **Intentional Redesign**

The faculty and district partners were forced to make deliberate choices throughout the redesign process. For example, SDSU may have experienced success in addressing new requirements hastened by CalAPA by simply updating or reallocating existing assignments. Such an effort may not have required the deeper analysis and consideration of course content that this effort involved. Likewise, the development of new content, and reallocation of content across the course sequence, would not have been required. Finally, the need to engage in continuous cycles of review and data-driven improvement would not have been as urgent. The faculty determined early on that such an effort would likely fall short of fully embracing the opportunity for formative assessment and growth that CalAPA provides to candidates. Instead, SDSU chose to reconsider the program in its entirety, through the complementary lenses of the CalAPA cycles and the districts that employ graduates. This made for a considerable, time-intensive effort that resulted in a largely redesigned program that is fully responsive to the needs of the region's schools and provides the skills California has carefully and deliberately identified for entry-level school leaders.

Though the language in the CalAPA around equity is not explicit, the responsibility of a thoughtful response to issues of equity lies in the partnership between a preparation program and the districts it serves. SDSU and its district partners recognized this as an opportunity. This led SDSU and district partners to co-construct foundational knowledge and practices focused on equity. It helped define common language and expectations of what equity-driven leadership means and how it functions in the educational landscape. This work also emphasizes the importance that the partnership places on embedding values of equity and social justice throughout the program, ultimately helping to shape the leaders that are most needed.

## **Supporting Statewide Implementation**

CTC, through its regional think tanks, has supported programs in learning more about the CalAPA and has used SDSU as one example of successful program changes. CTC staff has sought to help programs across the state integrate the new performance assessment into their programs. The initial

step was a two-day workshop designed to formally introduce the CalAPA, describe one university's response as an example, and support the initial planning of personnel from programs in attendance.

In November of 2017, and again in January of 2018, representatives from multiple administrative services credential programs across the state came together for workshops to learn more about the CalAPA design, pilot, and implementation. The sessions sought to provide participants with an initial understanding of the assessment and highlight one potential process for redesigning and updating existing preparation program curricula to align with the new performance assessments. The workshop was provided through a collaboration with SDSU's Educational Leadership faculty and the CTC.

The stakes are high for all program providers; administrative candidates, districts, and the public will be critical in evaluating preparation programs through the publicly available CalAPA pass rates. For the program providers involved in this workshop, professional development was designed to instill a better understanding of the new accountability measures and provide time for teams to create a plan of action for responding to the CalAPA.

Tier 1 providers learned more about the rigorous components of the CalAPA, administrative accountability measures, and the integration of the CAPE and California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSELs) into the CalAPA. CTC disseminated development information, design history, assessment components, and explanation of the pilot study and feedback summary. SDSU was invited to share experiences and best practices regarding their program alignment, course restructure, and content redesign of their Tier 1 program. The presentation included details of their journey, which involved the creation of urgency and buy-in, course redesign, resource allocations, efforts to include district partners, and the initial implementation of the CalAPA.

Outcomes of the workshop were designed to help Tier 1 programs to be not only knowledgeable of the CalAPA, but also able to determine, articulate, and create a plan for needed changes to their program and courses in order for their students to be successful on the CalAPA.

Initially, many workshop attendees expressed their concern regarding CalAPA assignment requirements and the lack of program alignment and course content in their Tier 1 programs. Many workshop attendees shared that transitioning to the CalAPA format will force their faculty to reflect on current course content and pedagogy. The teams

shared that they hope this reflective process will guide programs in making the necessary course content changes to help their students be successful on the CalAPA and, ultimately, as principals.

### **Accommodating the CalAPA: Initial Responses from Program Participants**

A program evaluation was initiated to document participants' responses to, and probable outcomes of, the workshop experience. The evaluation effort employed limited surveys collected prior to and immediately following the workshop. While the long-term intent of this evaluation effort is to chart program responses to and accommodations for the CalAPA over time, this initial, formative inquiry sharply focused on the first 48 hours of CalAPA introduction facilitated by the workshop. Specifically, we examined participant self-reported knowledge about the CalAPA and beliefs about necessary actions and anticipated responses to the CalAPA, both 1) prior to engaging in the workshop and 2) at the conclusion of the workshop.

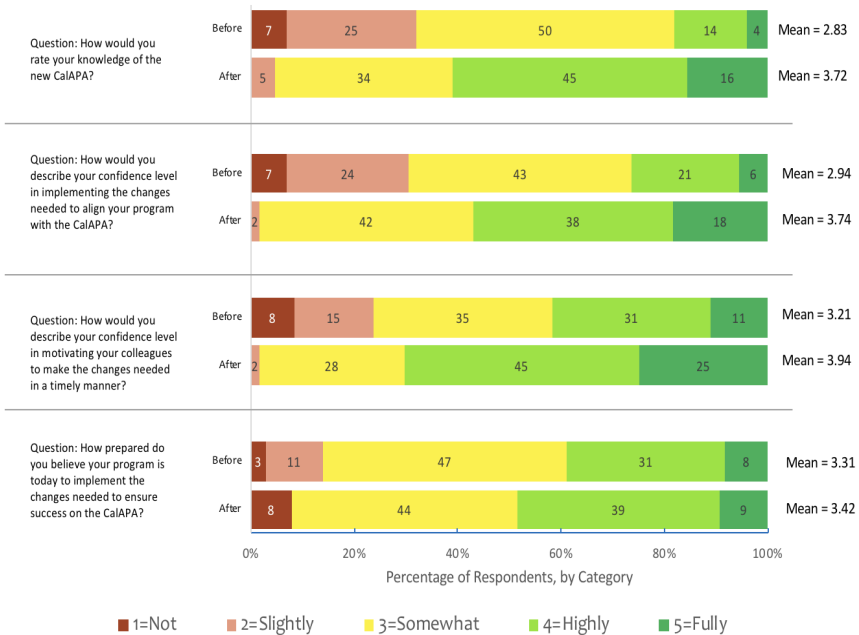
Survey items included both open-ended and Likert-based selected response items. Survey data was analyzed to describe the participants' self-reported levels of understanding and confidence in implementing CalAPA-related curricular changes. Additionally, a comparison of pre- and post-workshop responses was conducted to quantify any response shifts that could be attributed to the workshop content. Finally, participants reported their anticipated allocation of time for a range of possible CalAPA-prompted efforts that included developing curriculum, rearranging assignments, and training faculty on CalAPA.

A total of 72 participants provided survey responses. This included 33 respondents at the November workshop conducted in San Diego. Another 39 responses were collected from participants at the January workshop held in Santa Clarita. Our intent was to describe changes in understanding based on key aspects of the CalAPA initiative, as reported by workshop attendees.

### **CalAPA Knowledge and Self-Assessed Confidence Concerning Its Implementation**

The workshop was designed to increase participants' understanding of the CalAPA and bolster their ability to influence their programs' responses to

its implementation. Four key questions were posed to participants prior to and following the workshop. Figure 1 presents a comparison of aggregated participant responses to these questions which were provided on a five-point Likert-scale. Mean responses were also calculated to describe the average rating. Increases in ratings, on average, were observed when post-workshop responses were compared to those collected prior to the workshop.



*Figure 1.* Participant Response Distribution Self-Assessed CalAPA Constructs, Pre-to-Post Comparison (n=72)

Participant ratings increased most favorably with regard to self-assessed knowledge of the CalAPA. The average responses increased by almost one full point (presurvey M=2.83, postsurvey M=3.72), and the standard deviation decreased, indicating ratings which were more closely clustered around the elevated postsurvey mean (presurvey SD=.90, postsurvey SD=.78). Similar changes occurred for questions about confidence in implementing changes (presurvey M=2.94, SD=.98;

postsurvey M=3.74, SD=.78) and confidence in influencing the response of colleagues (presurvey M=3.21, SD=1.09; postsurvey M=3.94, SD=.77). It was participants’ perceptions of their preparation to implement the necessary changes that underwent the smallest amount of growth (presurvey M=3.31, SD=.88; postsurvey M=3.42, SD=.96). Here, the participants’ responses became less consistent, based on the increased standard deviation calculated for the postsurvey.

### Anticipated Allocation of Efforts to Implement CalAPA

Respondents also indicated their anticipated allocation of efforts for a range of potential activities in response to the new CalAPA requirement. Figure 2 presents the distribution of responses to this query.

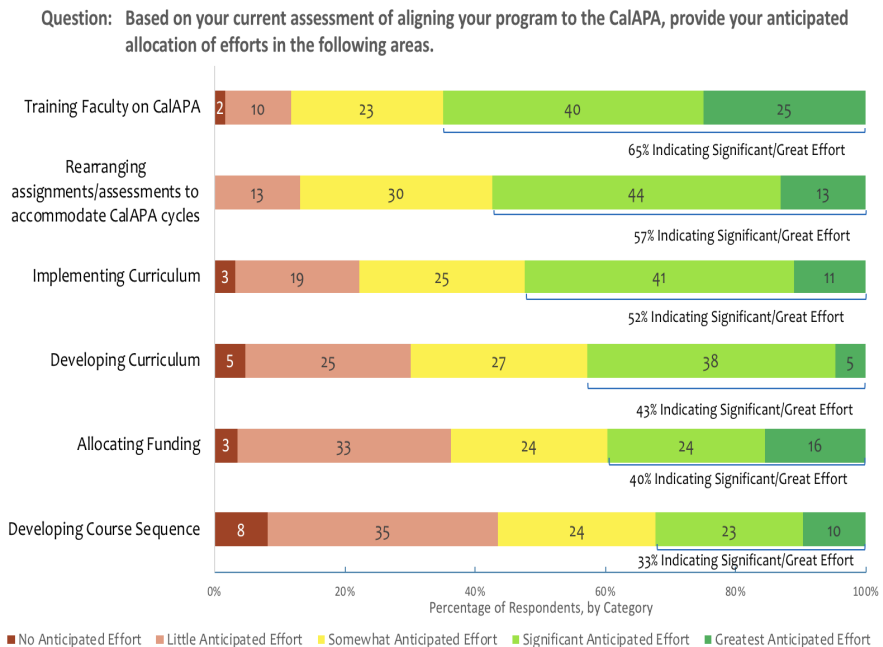


Figure 2. Participant Response Distribution for Anticipated Allocation of Efforts in Response to CalAPA (n=72)

The training of faculty garnered the highest number of “greatest anticipated” and “significant anticipated effort” responses. This was



followed closely by intentions to rearrange assignments and assessments, given the added assessment requirements of the CalAPA. Interestingly, only one-third of participants indicated a strong intention to address course sequencing through development efforts, while 43% indicated a likelihood of developing curriculum.

### **Anticipated Barriers to Implementing CalAPA**

Participants were also asked to anticipate potential barriers in accommodating the CalAPA in their programs. Responses to this open-ended question were categorized, resulting in the following key constructs and corresponding frequencies with which they were expressed by participants:

- Time (24)
- Funding (5)
- Lack of Program Staffing (5)
- Organizational Resistance (4)
- Candidate Pass Rates (2)
- Lack of CalAPA Knowledge (2)
- Lack of Logistical Knowledge (2)

Participants noted time as an anticipated barrier 24 times. The second most frequently occurring response related to funding and its availability to support the necessary efforts program providers would need to make to integrate CalAPA into their curricula. Another unique response was the anticipation of resistance from both university and district partners. Within this response, there were references to considerations of political realities in relation to possible pushback from faculty as well as district partners.

### **Looking to the Future**

Our evaluation of the CalAPA workshop revealed a series of initial impacts the workshop had on participant knowledge of the new performance assessment, as well as participant insights on the changes they anticipate making in adapting their program. Overall, the workshop had a significant impact on participant knowledge of the CalAPA. The data gathered indicates a positive increase in participants' knowledge and

confidence to mobilize efforts toward aligning their programs to the new performance assessment. The data also indicates that preparation programs see training faculty on the CalAPA as a main priority in redesigning their programs. In this regard, the workshop provided valuable content and time to both gain knowledge and chart a plan going forward. Initial responses indicate that, as next steps, programs will focus their efforts on modifying assignments over restructuring course sequence, courses offered, or the overall curriculum of the program. This differs from SDSU's approach. SDSU approached the opportunity to redesign the entire program with intentionality by assessing the program, strengthening district partnerships, aligning courses with the administrative standards, and defining experiences that would prepare candidates for the CalAPA.

Initial feedback also points to two challenges programs face: aligning curriculum and providing meaningful internships. Programs anticipate struggling with aligning curriculum with CalAPA while staying true to their program's vision. Designing and refining the balance between what makes a program unique and preparing candidates for credential performance assessments is a challenge. However, programs should not lose sight of their strengths but, rather, leverage them to revise their program to prepare candidates for the CalAPA. SDSU serves as a positive example, as this program took the opportunity to redefine its relationships with partner districts and its focus on equity, which surfaced through its work with districts. Programs also continue to seek out ways of providing meaningful internships. Increasing the length of internships alone does not make up for quality of supervisors and coaches; however, if both the length and quality of placements are well-structured, this can result in a powerful combination that provides aspiring administrative candidates with meaningful internship experiences.

Current national discourse around privatizing education has prompted educators and researchers alike to think about the implications of a system such as the CalAPA. We know three immediate implications: 1) the CalAPA will assess the preparedness of soon-to-be principals, 2) preparation programs will need to make adjustments to prepare candidates, 3) if administrative candidates successfully pass the CalAPA, then they have demonstrated initial preparedness to lead schools. The CalAPA has been designed to help raise the rigor of assessing administrative candidates with the goal of supplying California with principals that can successfully lead public schools through the diverse challenges they face.

As programs engage in the work of redesign, we anticipate learning more about what efforts have the most substantial impacts on programs and their candidates. Our intent was to document early steps and intentions in the change process. Additional program evaluation conducted over time will further expand our understanding of the initial data reported here on the CalAPA accommodation process, as experienced by a range of administrator preparation programs in California.

ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ OJEDA is a lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University, 2368 Bar Bit Rd., Spring Valley, CA 91978. Email: [agonzaleszojeda@sdsu.edu](mailto:agonzaleszojeda@sdsu.edu)

JAMES M. MARSHALL is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University, 5500 Campanile Dr. San Diego, CA 92182-1190. Email: [marshall@sdsu.edu](mailto:marshall@sdsu.edu)

DOUGLAS FISHER is a professor and chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University, 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182-1190. Email: [dfisher@sdsu.edu](mailto:dfisher@sdsu.edu)

## References

- Briggs, K., Cheney, G. R., Davis, J., & Moll, K. (2013). *Operating in the dark: What outdated state policies and data gaps mean for effective school leadership*. Dallas, TX: George W. Bush Institute.
- California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). (2017). *California Administrator Performance Assessment: CalAPA*. Retrieved from <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/asc>
- Hess, F. M., & Kelly, A. P. (2005). An innovative look, a recalcitrant reality: The politics of principal preparation reform. *Educational Policy, 19*(1), 155–180.
- Indiana CORE Assessments for Educator Licensure. (2018). (039) School administrator—Building level. Retrieved from [https://www.in.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML\\_FRAG/INO39\\_TestPage.html](https://www.in.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/INO39_TestPage.html)
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2008). Linking leadership to student learning: The contributions of leader efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(4), 496–528.
- Linn, R. L., Baker, E. L., & Dunbar, S. B. (1991). Complex, performance-based assessment: Expectations and validation criteria. *Educational Researcher, 20*(8), 15–21.
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE). (2017, January 25). Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL). Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pal/tasks.html>
- Mendels, P., & Mitgang, L. D. (2013). Creating strong principals. *Educational Leadership, 70*(7), 22–29.
- Orr, M. T., & Orphanos, S. (2011). How graduate-level preparation influences the effectiveness of school leaders: A comparison of the outcomes of exemplary and conventional leadership preparation programs for principals. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 47*(1), 18–70.
- Orr, M. T., Pecheone, R., Hollingworth, L., Beaudin, B., Snyder, J., & Murphy, J. (2017). The performance assessment for leaders: Construct validity and reliability evidence. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 13*(2), 139–161.
- Orr, M. T., Silverberg, R., & LeTendre, B. (2006, April). *Comparing leadership development from pipeline to preparation to*

*advancement: A study of multiple institutions' leadership preparation programs.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Stewart, V. (2013). School leadership around the world. *Educational Leadership*, 70(7), 48–54.