

Reforming the California Public School Administrator Licensure System Through the Alignment of Research, Policy, and Practice: Policy Perspectives and Recommendations from the California Association of Professors of Educational Administration (CAPEA)

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The following report was developed during the summer and fall of 2010 by a sub-committee of the California Professors of Educational Administration associa-

tion for the purposes of (a) informing the CCTC, Administrative Services Credential Advisory Committee in its review of the laws and regulations pertaining to California's Administrative Services Credential and, (b) providing a set of recommendations to help guide administrator licensure reform in California.

Introduction

The current era of school reform has illuminated and amplified the importance of school leaders in providing the conditions and support necessary to engender powerful teaching and learning for all children. Commensurate with this phenomenon is an increased focus on holding school leaders accountable for essential school outcomes. As a consequence, renewed attention has been directed by policy makers, scholars, and school district leaders on the methods used to assess leadership competence and the programs used to prepare effective administrators. Comparatively less attention has been given to the design and quality of state administrator licensure systems and especially those that are explicitly crafted around an empirically sound conceptual framework, a thoughtful rationale that addresses both formative and summative functions, or the sensitivity to certify the competence of administrative professionals in increasingly complex educational environments.

In this report, we outline the rationale, policies, and practices commonly used to license school administrators, and we conclude with a set of recommendations to help guide the reform of California's administrator licensure system. As university faculty members of accredited educational administrator preparation programs in California, we are uniquely positioned to provide both practical advice and theoretical perspectives to policy makers regarding the educational contexts, leadership needs, and the processes most likely to produce and support school leaders who can stimulate powerful teaching and learning for all students in California's public schools. Importantly, in this report we provide a research-based conceptual framework for thinking about professional licensure and our recommendations were developed from both a scholarly analysis of administrator licensure systems across the United States and a robust dialogue among educational administration faculty members from several California universities.

Before embarking upon a reform agenda it is important that one understands the history, context, and logic behind professional licensure in education. That is, before identifying the "how to," we need to understand the "what is." To accomplish this, we provide a brief review of the rationale for professional licensure and the policies used by the 50 states to license school leaders. While a review of the licensure policies across the nation illuminates and contrasts the design features of licensure systems among states, it does not provide the underlying rationale for these features. Nevertheless, comparing California's administrator licensure system with those of other states provides a useful perspective from which to begin the analysis of how to improve the system.

The Rationale for Professional Licensure

The origins of professional licensure go back centuries. In fact, they can be traced to the establishment of medieval guilds, which were established (in part) to ensure the maintenance of professional standards and the development of highly skilled craftsmen. Contemporary vestiges of the guild system can be seen in both the labor union movement and in the regulation of training, career induction, and career progression within a wide range of professions. In emerging 19th Century market-driven economies, professional licensure became a vehicle to advance both the economic and social status of the middle class, a function that it continues to serve today. In modern society virtually all professions that require advanced or prolonged training in a highly skilled domain of work are legitimized through some form of licensure.

A review of professional licensure and its development in America over the past century reveals both common themes and diverse perspectives. For example, licensure provides the public with the assurance (both symbolically and in the form of a public contract) of quality and integrity in the practice of highly skilled (and valued) professions. The American Medical Association's website illustrates the point:

Licenses are granted to ensure the public that the physician who presents himself/herself for licensure has successfully completed an appropriate sequence of medical education, including a specified amount of residency training in an accredited program, and has demonstrated competence through successful completion of an examination or other certification demonstrating qualification for licensure. (<http://www.ama-assn.org/aps/physcred.html#license>)

Nevertheless, across the vast American professional landscape, the purposes of licensure vary considerably. For some professions (e.g., education), licensure certifies that an individual possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform professional services. In some highly skilled professions licensure constrains access to those who have not demonstrated competence through formal skill-based training and on-the-job assessment (e.g., general contracting). And yet, in other professions, licensure provides the general public with an assurance of quality and that the work performed by a licensed practitioner will at once benefit and not harm the recipient (e.g., medicine and law). Of course, in many professions, licensure serves all three functions.

In most professions, licensure addresses eight essential purposes (to one degree or another):

1. It serves as a sorting mechanism that stratifies the workplace (e.g., status hierarchies, career opportunities, differential pay schemes, etc.) according to the levels of skill required to perform valued tasks in a particular field of practice.
2. It provides a framework for advancing the professional development and competence of workers within a designated trade, craft, or profession.

3. Much like the Seal of Good Housekeeping, licensure helps to establish a level of consumer trust and confidence in the profession itself and in the competence of its agents.
4. It provides a form of consumer protection against professional malfeasance or malpractice through various sanctions and/or legal remedies. In so doing, licensure implicitly places the endorsement of the state and/or professional association behind the work provided and enforces that endorsement through the power of the legal system.
5. It signifies the most valued characteristics, attributes, and procedures of a profession (e.g., this is who we are, what we do, and how we do things).
6. It helps to shape the content of the profession by defining specifically, or generally, the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to practice/perform important services.
7. In many professions, licensure provides a nexus between standards of competence and proof of competence (e.g., one does not become a licensed contractor without successfully completing supervised training experiences that are based upon established standards of practice and by demonstrating the ability to perform the job).
8. It serves to protect the integrity of a profession and the standards of quality established by its agents and expert practitioners.

Administrative Licensing Policies in The 50 States

Each of the 50 states requires professional licensure for those who wish to lead and manage schools and school districts. However, there is very little, if any, coherence across the states in terms of the design features, policy frameworks, conceptual logic, or practices that undergird their licensing systems. Moreover, the degree of alignment between professional standards and the policy frameworks upon which licensure systems are constructed vary from state to state. For example, in some states the education code explicitly links the licensure system to professional standards (such as those established by The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium). However, in most states education code statutes make little, if any, reference to such standards and are often developed as a consequence of political interests rather than empirically grounded initiatives. Consequently, licensure details are most often provided by the program accreditation criteria established by the respective state departments of education and operationalized through accredited licensure programs. Such loose coupling between education code statutes and their implementation invites interpretive renditions of vaguely worded policies by regulatory agencies and increases the risk of inter-institutional inconsistencies in the application of policy.

The frequently incongruent, ill-conceived, and piecemeal systems of administrator licensure in America underscore several important questions regarding what licensure actually means. For example, does licensure

mean that a recipient has attained professional expertise or is simply a novice? Similarly, is the recipient highly competent or simply minimally competent? Does licensure mean that the recipient has demonstrated the skills needed to manage schools or has mastered the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to lead schools? If the latter, which skills matter most, and which have been demonstrated at what levels of competence? Unfortunately, the answers to these questions are not well defined in most state statutes or administrative regulations.

An overview of the licensure systems used by the 50 states to certify school administrators and superintendents provides some useful insights. State administrator licensure systems and procedures generally include criteria for a wide range of leadership, supervisory, and management positions at school sites and district offices. However, given the complexity of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the full range of administrative licensure regulations for each of the 50 states, the following analysis focused specifically on licensure policy requirements for administrative service at school-sites and for the superintendency. It did not directly address program accreditation criteria or the program characteristics of license providers.

The following analysis was prepared by Dr. Stephen Davis of Cal Poly Pomona to assist the work of the Administrative Services Credential Advisory Panel, established in the summer of 2010 by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, to assess and make recommendations regarding the structure and system of administrator licensure in California. The following analysis was not a product of CAPEA nor formally endorsed by all CAPEA members, and CAPEA makes no claim of accuracy relating to its content. However, it grounds our recommendations upon the most recent analysis of administrator licensure systems in America.

Although limited to the requirements used to license site administrators and superintendents, the analysis illuminates several important design features of licensure systems. Conducted during the spring and summer of 2010, the analysis consists of administrator licensure data from all 50 state education codes, state department administrative regulations, and licensure program curricula. Data were acquired and triangulated through a review of individual state department of education websites, state education codes, and online program descriptions from one or more credential issuing institutions of higher education from each state. The licensure policies of each state were organized around 12 categories that emerged from the content analysis of each state's licensure policies. A frequency table was created that compares states with each category (see Table 1 in the Appendix).

Twelve Licensure Categories Examined

1. States requiring one license for all pre-K–12 administrative jobs and levels.
2. States requiring one license for all school-site administrative positions.
3. States requiring initial (basic) and continuing (advanced) licenses.

4. States requiring an elementary endorsement.
5. States requiring a secondary endorsement.
6. States requiring a vice principal endorsement.
7. States requiring a principal endorsement.
8. States requiring both position-specific and school level endorsements.
9. States requiring superintendent licensure or endorsement.
10. States requiring a masters degree.
11. States requiring a competency exam.
12. States requiring prior years of teaching or other credentialed professional experience.

Findings

License Type

1. *States requiring one license for all pre-K–12 administrative jobs and levels.*

Only 8 (16%) states (including California) require a single license to certify employment for all pre-K–12 administrative positions (CA, DE, FL, NE, NV, NM, OR, UT).

2. *States requiring one license for all school-site administrative positions.*

Eighteen (36%) states require a single license for school-site administrative positions (e.g., in various combinations), including principal, vice principal (or variations thereof), deans, and for elementary, middle, and high school settings (CA, AZ, AK, AR, CO, CT, IL, IN, IA, MT, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, VA, WA, WI).

3. *States requiring initial (basic) and continuing (advanced) licenses.*

Twenty states (40%), including California, require a multi-tiered licensure system. In most cases, a candidate receives an initial or preliminary license that is active for 1 to 5 years (depending on the state). Continued licensure typically requires the accumulation of additional graduate course units and/or professional development hours (as verified by either an IHE or district office) (CA, AL, GA, KS, KY, LA, MA, MN, MS, MO, OR, RI, SD, TN, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI).

Professional Endorsements—Site-level Administration

A total of 19 states (38%) require some type of professional endorsement that certifies employment according to school level (e.g., elementary or secondary) or according to position type (e.g., principal, vice/assistant/associate principal, dean). A few states also require separate licensure for the supervision of curriculum and instruction, special education, and teacher leadership functions at the site level (note: virtually all states require separate licensure for service as guidance counselors and school psychologists).

4. *States requiring an elementary endorsement.*

Seven (14%) states require a specific endorsement for administrative service in an elementary school (MA, ME, MN, MO, ND, RI, SC). Endorsements typically involve elementary-focused coursework offered through the candidate's initial credential program, elementary-based professional development activities taken after graduation, or the completion of a supervised internship at an elementary school. In some cases, the endorsement is added to the initial, or basic, credential (but this is the exception).

5. *States requiring a secondary endorsement.*

Five states (10%) require a specific endorsement for administrative service in a secondary school (MA, MN, MO, ND, RI). Endorsement requirements mirror those described in #3, above.

6. *States requiring a vice principal endorsement.*

Six states (12%) require endorsement to serve as a vice principal (or variation thereof) (GA, ID, MD, MI, NC, OR). As with school-level endorsements, states that require a position endorsement do so through university coursework embedded within the initial licensure program, post-graduation professional development activities, or some combination of the two.

7. *States requiring a principal endorsement.*

Fifteen states (30%) require endorsement to serve as a principal (GA, ID, MA, MD, ME, MI, MC, OK, OR, SC, SD, TX, VT, WI, WV). *Note: Ohio offers (but does not require) an urban principal endorsement and an administrative specialist endorsement.*

8. *States requiring both position and school level endorsements.*

Twelve (24%) states require position endorsements only (GA, ID, MD, MI, MC, OK, OR, SD, TX, VT, WV, WI), four states (8%) require school level endorsements only (ND, MN, MO, RI), and three states (6%) require both position and school level endorsements (ME, MA, SC).

Superintendents

9. *States requiring superintendent licensure or endorsement.*

Thirty-four (68%) states require either a special license or credential endorsement to serve as a superintendent (AK, AR, AZ, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MO, MT, NJ, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TX, VT, WI, WV). Typically, these states require coursework taken after one has served as a licensed principal for three or more years. In a few cases, a superintendent endorsement is granted following a period of service as a district office administrator in concert with supervised internship activities. Washington does not require licensure to work as a superintendent or assistant/associate/deputy superin-

tendent, but offers a credential for those who wish to pursue formal academic training for these positions. In the sixteen states that do not require additional certification (like California), one may become a superintendent with a basic administrative credential, or in some cases, with no credential at all (e.g., California).

Note: it is common for states to require special licensure or endorsement for service as a district office business manager/fiscal services administrator, special education director, and/or pupil personnel services director (frequency data were not tallied for these licenses).

Other Requirements

10. States requiring a master's degree.

Twenty-six (52%) states require a masters degree as a condition for administrative licensure (AL, AZ, AK, CT, DE, FL, IL, KY, LA, MT, NB, NC, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OR, RI, SC, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI, WV). A review of selected university administrator credential programs in these states revealed that licensure and masters course requirements typically overlap. In a few programs it is possible to acquire licensure without also acquiring a masters degree, however, such variations are the consequence of institutional rather than state policy.

11. States requiring a competency exam.

Twenty-one (42%) states require a passing score on an administrative competency exam in addition to completion of a course of study at an accredited university (AZ, FL, GA, KS, KY, LA, MN, MO, MS, NB, NC, NJ, NM, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TX, UT, VT). The SLLA exam is the most commonly used assessment, followed by the Praxis test, and locally developed assessments (e.g., OK, OR).

Note: only in California is a competency exam option provided as the sole basis for administrative licensure.

12. States requiring prior years of teaching or credentialed professional experience.

Most candidates for administrative licensure are required to have experience as a classroom teacher, other credentialed employee, or some combination thereof. A review of state department websites, education codes, and university programs revealed data for 28 states. Although data for 22 states were not located, it may be reasonable to assume that for most, some prior teaching or professional experience is required for administrative licensure. The lack of data on this topic may be a consequence of obscure and fragmented formats of state education codes and other policy documents. In states where prior service data were found, the number of years required varies. Following is a breakdown of states by years of service required:

1 year:	n/a
2 years (9, 18%):	CT, IL, IN, MD, MO, NB, OK, OR, TX
3 years (16, 32%):	CA, DE, IA, LA, MA, MN, MS, MT, ND, NV, RI, SC, TN, UT, VA, WV
4 years (2, 4%):	ID, PA
5 years (1, 2%):	NJ

Alternative licensure

Although policies pertaining to alternative pathways to administrator licensure were not examined in this analysis, such options did appear in a number of states (for example—CA, OK, OR, and VA). One interesting and unique variation to state administrator licensure policies was found in the Utah education codes which charges local school boards with the responsibility for determining the proper alignment between specific administrative positions and licensure requirements. Additional information regarding alternative administrator licensure policies can be found in a report published in 2004 by the Education Commission of the States (see <http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/IssueCollapse.asp>)

See Table 1 (Appendix) for a summary of the data presented above.

Discussion

The data described above raise a number of important issues and conclusions. These were shared with, and recognized by, the CAPEA sub-committee.

1. The ease of public access to important licensure data varies widely from state to state. In some states (e.g., Virginia), the Department of Education website provided comprehensive and detailed information. In other states (e.g., New York), the search for comprehensive licensure criteria required a combined review of SDE, education code, university program documents, and New York City school system policies. In some states, education code language was thorough and descriptive, while in other states, the details of administrator licensure were found in the administrative regulations developed by state education departments. In all but a handful of states, the task of acquiring comprehensive and detailed licensure information required a review of more than one resource.
2. In no instance was documentation found that provided a clear articulation of the state's rationale, purpose, or philosophy regarding administrative licensure. Moreover, licensure statutes across the 50 states are generally not directly aligned with well-developed theoretical or conceptual frameworks for leadership development or evaluation, nor directly aligned with standards for administrative practice. This is not to suggest that professional standards are not used to assess program quality and (in many cases) candidate competency, or used as the basis to evaluate administrators. It refers to the finding that in most states the licensure policy language set by the

legislature is indirectly connected to professional standards through administrative regulations adopted by appointed regulatory bodies such as the CCTC. In several states, like California, theoretical and conceptual frameworks commonly exist (albeit obliquely) within state department rules and regulations pertaining to program accreditation and/or standards for professional practice. Although licensure is required to become an administrator, most state laws provide little descriptive information about their licensure systems. One notable exception is Virginia, where Wallace Foundation funds have stimulated the development of a well-articulated administrator licensure system and policy framework. The framework was developed and approved by the Virginia State Board of Education. To read a copy of the framework, go to: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/advancing_leadership_agenda.pdf. *Note: The Virginia the legislature delegated “final authority for licensure” to the State Board of Education (see 8VAC-22-590).*

3. The single administrator credential that certifies a candidate for service at all levels and settings within pre-K–12 systems is the exception rather than the rule. Only eight states (including CA) maintain such policies. One may conclude that the increasing complexities of administering schools and school districts and the numerous contextual variations in institutional settings and professional roles has prompted the development of specialized administrative credentials or endorsements that are added to an initial license. Although empirical research regarding state licensure and its impact on principal quality is virtually non-existent, this conclusion is similar in some ways to the findings of research by Heck and Marcoulides (1996) on the impact of school contextual variables and the complexity of professional roles on principal evaluation. In their analysis of 56 California public school principals and 328 teachers, Heck and Marcoulides found that the complexities of administering schools are not uniform across schools but are subject to variations in contextual and environmental factors. One-size-fits-all systems of evaluation are blunt instruments that fail to capture the nuances and variations in organizations and their environments that can impact principal performance.
4. In the vast majority of states (68%) service as a superintendent requires additional licensure and/or endorsement that typically consists of advanced graduate coursework, prior administrative experience (either as a principal or district office administrator), and/or an internship. In some IHEs, such coursework comes bundled with a doctoral degree. California requires no certification to become a superintendent or to work in a district office administrative position.
5. In rare instances (e.g., Virginia), state resources or other relevant documentation clearly or comprehensively address the intricate (yet vital) relationship between the “architecture” of licensure policy, professional standards, program accreditation criteria, and administrator evaluation. In no instance did the documentation address instructional practices. This lack of articula-

tion raises legitimate concerns about the capacity of a licensure policy on its own to meaningfully impact professional practice. Licensure, professional development, program accreditation, instructional practice, and administrator evaluation are vital components along a continuum of interrelated variables that influence performance. Comprehensive and articulated treatment of these variables is rarely found in state licensure policies.

6. State administrator licensure is generally summative in nature. That is, its primary function appears to be in providing public assurance of minimal professional competency. Less than half of the states require some form of advanced licensure or use the licensure system to promote professional growth and development. The criteria for issuing advanced licenses are commonly based solely upon the completion of additional hours of graduate coursework or professional development activities. Assessments of professional competence or organizational outcomes are rarely included in the criteria used to determine an administrator's eligibility for advanced licensure.

A Critical Commentary on Administrator Licensure in California

In California, administrative licensure procedures emerge from a broad statutory framework for certifying a person's eligibility to manage public schools. The following six statutory elements contained within this framework are intended to reinforce the imprimatur of quality:

1. The completion of a state approved program of preparation (EC 44270).
2. Licensure renewal requirements (EC 44270).
3. A tiered licensure system intended to advance professional growth (EC 44270.1).
4. Certification of standards-based competence in the field (44225).
5. A system of sanctions for the misuse or misapplication of a license (EC44225).
6. Assurance of good moral character and mental ability (EC 44325).

As with most other states, the statutory language pertaining to administrator licensure offers general guidelines that delegate much of the responsibility for fleshing out the details and operational protocols to state departments and licensure providers. In California, as in all states, licensure provides the "architectural framework" that informs and guides the processes of professional preparation and development and career advancement. These processes are further guided and shaped by state adopted standards of practice (i.e., CPSELs) and program accreditation criteria and requirements.

In California, the Education Code sections relating to administrator licensure have undergone a few revisions (but not large-scale overhauls) since their inception nearly 40 years ago, whereas accreditation standards and procedures have undergone multiple revisions. Moreover, during this

time the development of the knowledge base in the field has evolved significantly. This knowledge base, in combination with the advent of the ISLLC Standards and revised accreditation requirements, has stimulated programmatic and curricular changes among licensure providers (e.g., primarily universities). A pervasive skepticism among some legislators regarding the quality of university administrator preparation programs has also opened alternative (and controversial) pathways to the field, and commensurately, non-traditional providers (the administrative testing option for licensure is an extreme example of this as is the Education Code provision that permits the employment of non-credentialed superintendents). Without question, change has come to the field of educational administration in California, partially as a consequence of refinements to statutory law, but mostly as a consequence of regulatory system adjustments, advances in craft knowledge, and improved university programs.

We believe that after four decades of social, political, and economic change, the supporting rationale and conceptual framework for California's current administrator licensure policy must be updated. California is the nation's most diverse state ethnically, economically, politically, socially, educationally, and geographically, and the complexities of leading and managing the state's public schools and school systems are legendary. The Education Code should be explicit in defining the purposes of administrator licensure and in aligning those purposes with the current and predicted challenges faced by school leaders in their efforts to advance powerful teaching and learning for all of California's public school students.

Although some argue that such diversity provides a rationale for creating separate endorsements or credential authorizations, we believe that school districts in the far reaches of the state and those within disadvantaged communities require more, not less, flexibility in identifying, developing, and hiring talented administrators. Unfortunately, the availability of highly trained school administrators is not evenly distributed across California's diverse communities and geographic regions and access to high quality administrative preparation and professional development is limited in several areas of the state. Recent research released by WestED also revealed that the expected turnover of administrators in some regions of the state over the next decade is as high as 46%. As a result of such challenges, we believe that the administrator licensure system should not unreasonably constrain or limit school districts in their ability to employ skilled leaders.

The professional license (Tier II) has come under particular criticism by many higher education faculty members and practicing administrators for its lack of rigor and relevance. Intended as a mechanism to support newly hired administrators and as a pathway to the development of more advanced administrative knowledge and skills, the concern is that it serves neither function particularly well. Common concerns include:

1. The Education Code provides a five-year window within which a newly

hired administrator who holds a preliminary services credential must complete the requirements for a Tier II (professional) credential. Although the intent of the law was to provide new administrators with deeper levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as professional induction, mentoring, and support, the practical impact has been only marginally effective. Anecdotal evidence from the field suggests that far too many new administrators wait for three or four years before enrolling in a Tier II approved program of study. By then, the need for professional induction has greatly diminished.

2. Although shaped and guided by accreditation standards and criteria, the application and quality of Tier II programs varies dramatically in the field. For example, in recent years, legislation (AB 430) made it possible for such programs to be offered free through County Offices of Education, school districts, or professional associations such as ACSA (although the state's current budget crisis has since pulled funding support). As a result, university sponsored Tier II programs withered on the vine and all but disappeared from many campuses. University professors complained that under such programs Tier II became captive to a practitioner's perspective, lost consistency, and lost its alignment with the standards, theoretical underpinnings and academic rigor of the profession. Many university faculty members have raised concerns about the paucity of rigorously applied, research-based assessments of program quality or outcomes by non-university providers like ACSA, county offices of education, or school districts.
3. The impact of on-the-job learning is greatly enhanced when it is accompanied by ongoing and highly skilled mentoring and coaching. Some critics of the Tier II program argue that the Education Code provides little guidance on this issue and as a consequence, the quality of Tier II induction plans and learning experiences varies widely between candidates, between programs, and between non-university providers (such as ACSA). The lack of state funding support for mentoring activities has also contributed to this problem.

Finally, we believe that administrators at *all* levels from assistant principal to superintendent should possess an appropriate administrative license. The knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to effectively lead California's schools and school districts must be grounded in both rigorous academic training in the field of educational leadership and craft wisdom born from the accumulation of experiences and responsibilities teaching and leading schools. As such, we would like to see a repeal of the law that allows districts to employ non-credentialed superintendents.

An Imperative for Licensure Reform: CAPEA's Position

As most experienced educators understand, changing the structures, sys-

tems, and practices of a school can be daunting (but doable), while changing longstanding and deeply ingrained institutional policies and practices can be ominous (and far more challenging both politically and practically). Thoughtful and rational reform of school administrative licensure systems can be done, and has been done in some states in recent years. However, to do this work effectively and comprehensively requires an analysis of five key questions:

1. How effective will the proposed system be in producing people who possess the requisite competencies to perform a variety of professional administrative services in highly diverse communities, schools, and districts?
2. How will the proposed system monitor and assess its effectiveness in producing competent administrators?
3. How well will the proposed system align with the methods and strategies used to accomplish its stated purposes, goals, and objectives?
4. How solid is the theoretical and conceptual foundation upon which the proposed system rests, and is it relevant to address contemporary and future conditions and needs in public education?
5. How will the proposed system provide the objective criteria needed to judge the quality of school leaders while also providing the impetus for ongoing professional growth and career development?

Of course, ultimately, the capacity to change the system depends largely on the degree of political will and support within the state legislature, state policy administrators, and among school practitioners. Reforming the California administrative credentialing system can be compared to a home building construction project. Typically, an architect provides the plans, the building materials provide the structural integrity of the house, the contractor and craftsmen skillfully assemble the home, and the homeowners experience the consequences of the design and assembly of the home. No single element of the building project or its participating stakeholders can be ignored if the final outcome is to be successful. Given this analogy, to redesign the California administrative licensure system by changing only its architecture (e.g., the Education Code and SDE policies) will not ensure success in ensuring the quality of new administrators or in improving the skills of existing administrators. Ultimately, the effectiveness of a redesigned licensure system also requires attention to the quality (and relevance) of the standards of administrative practice (e.g., the building materials), the credential programs and instructors (e.g., contractors and craftsmen), and the needs and characteristics of the students and parents (e.g., homeowners). Essentially, there must be a close articulation between the system's design (and its supporting logic), the standards of administrative practice, the skills of those who prepare administrators, and the needs of public school students.

CAPEA's Seven Recommendations for Licensure Reform

1. The state must think deeply about the purposes of administrator licensure, what it hopes to accomplish, and how it can most effectively advance the critical goals and objectives of public education in California that support learning for all students. We recommend that the logic, structure, and requirements of a new (or revised) licensure system be closely aligned with theories about effective leadership, professional development, and schools. In addition, the system must be closely aligned with professional standards (e.g., CPSELs, ISLLC).
2. We support a rigorous examination of the current system and its impact on providing highly skilled school leaders is needed (e.g., by “system” we mean the statutory language, the administrative rules and criteria used to enforce the statute, and the university programs established to implement the statute). In particular, ASCAP should examine the perceptions of current school administrators (at various levels) regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the California licensing system. Subsequent ASCAP policy recommendations to the CCTC should carefully reflect feedback from the field.
3. We support the two-tiered licensure system currently in effect. However, we believe that the Tier II credential requirement would be strengthened through adequate state funding to support the work of mentor principals and by requiring that the onset of candidate induction, mentoring, and professional development activities begin with the first year of employment as an administrator.
4. A new licensure system must recognize that the development of professional expertise and capacity in the field of educational administration requires a continuum of increasingly complex experiences that includes teaching expertise, teacher leadership, pre-service administrative training, mentored internships and career induction activities, and ongoing professional development that extends throughout an individual’s administrative career. To promote ongoing professional growth, the licensure system should include regular and incremental licensure reauthorizations (e.g., every 6 years) that require the completion of advanced coursework or other authorized professional development activities. It must also recognize that craft expertise in administration requires a robust understanding of how to plan, guide, and assess management activities and resources in ways that advance powerful teaching and learning.
5. The new licensure system must provide mechanisms to both assess an administrator’s level of competence and to advance his/her professional competence. These functions may be accomplished by including in the Education Code and supporting CCTC regulations, a) a clear definition of the standards and criteria for effective leadership performance, b) standards and protocols for judging effective performance, c) a requirement for the ongoing assessment of administrator competence, and d) requirements

for ongoing professional growth and development that are based on fair and accurate performance assessments.

6. The CCTC should consider the cost implications of any new licensure system (e.g., financial, programmatic, and human resource) to ensure that its recommendations are fiscally prudent and feasible.
7. Administrative licensure in California cannot be reasonably granted upon the basis of a passing score on a single examination (e.g., SLLA or CPACE). Although we recognize the importance of highly valid and reliable administrator competency assessments, we strenuously oppose the current state policy of allowing licensure through this venue exclusively.

We close with a message of hope and optimism. Opportunities to contribute to meaningful and impactful change in the state policy structure that frames the preparation and development of school administrators are few and far between. Several years have passed since the exercise of such a major analysis (and potential revision) in state administrator licensure policy. CAPEA members recognize and fully support this unique and valuable opportunity to collaborate with all those who strive to improve the quality of education for California's public school students. We believe that to produce and support effective school leaders for California's richly diverse schools and communities, a new system of administrator licensure is needed that considers each of our recommendations. Most importantly, we look forward to being ongoing and constructive partners in the work of the Administrative Services Credential Advisory Panel and in future efforts by the CCTC to procure and nurture legislative support for a dynamic and comprehensive administrator licensure reform proposal.

Sincerely,

The Members of the CAPEA Executive Council

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Ratified by the CAPEA Membership on October 1, 2010

APPENDIX

Table 1
Summary of Site-level Administrator and Superintendent Licensure Requirements in the USA (2010).

Licensure Category	Number	Percent	States
1. States with one license for all admin jobs and levels	8	16.0	CA, DE, FL, NE, NV, NM, OR, UT
2. States with one license for all school-site administrative positions	18	36.0	CA, AZ, AK, AR, CO, CT, IL, IN, IA, MT, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, VA, WA, WI
3. States with initial and continuing licenses (e.g, basic & advanced)	20	40.0	CA, AL, GA, KS, KY, LA, MA, MN, MS, MO, OR, RI, SD, TN, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI
4. States with elementary endorsements	7	14.0	ME, MA, MN, MO, ND, RI, SC
5. States with secondary endorsements	5	10.0	MA, MN, MO, ND, RI
6. States with vice principal endorsements	6	12.0	GA, ID, MD, MI, NC, OR
7. States with principal endorsements	15	30.0	GA, ID, ME, MD, MA, MI, NC, OK, OR, SC, SD, TX, VT, WV, WI
8. States with superintendent endorsements	34	68.0	AZ, AK, AR, CO, CT, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MO, MT, NJ, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TX, VT, WI, WV
9. Years of teaching or credentialed service required			
1 year:	0		
2 years:	8	16.0	CT, IL, IN, MD, MO, NB, OK, TX
3 years:	16	32.0	CA, DE, IA, LA, MA, MN, MS, MT, ND, NV, OR, RI, SC, TN, UT, VA, WV, ID, PA
4 years:	2	4.0	NJ
5 years:	1	2.0	
10. States requiring a MA Degree	26	52.0	AL, AZ, AK, CT, DE, FL, IL, KY, LA, MT, NB, NC, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OR, RI, SC, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI, WV
11. States requiring competency exam	21	42.0	AZ, FL, GA, KS, KY, LA, MN, MO, MS, NB, NC, NJ, NM, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TX, UT, VT