Developing Leadership Excellence

The Center for Applied Policy in Education (CAP-Ed), founded within the University of California, Davis School of Education in 2006, is committed to building the leadership capacity of educators throughout California in order to develop a more equitable education system statewide. Our driving vision is an educational system in which district and school leaders create the conditions so that all students can learn, thrive and grow. In keeping with the School of Education’s strategic plan, CAP-Ed is deeply committed to educational equity and social justice, focused on building partnerships and collaborative approaches to research, and working to inform and support effective educational policy.

CAP-Ed’s networks have served hundreds of district superintendents, principals, and teachers from across California. From Fortuna, in the most northern region of the state, to San Diego County, CAP-Ed has partnered with hundreds of educational leaders in order to bolster targeted, effective, and sustainable leadership that supports equity and student achievement.

The overall goal of CAP-Ed’s efforts is to evaluate and build capacity for systems leadership that positions teaching and learning at the center of all district work.

How CAP-Ed Is Impacting the Future of Education

The future of CAP-Ed is rich with opportunities for the expansion and growth of our networks and programs across the state. Projects in the works include:

• Establishing a new program of Superintendents Network Pedagogical Institutes in partnership with Network districts.
• Establishing Lab Districts Projects, in partnership with prominent education scholars, both locally and nationally, to study and evaluate applications of empirical research in education.
• Scaling toward a national presence through publications, conferences, and strategic communications.

In 2020–2021, CAP-Ed’s programs served 44 school district superintendents, 95 principals, and 87 teachers throughout California. Our mission is to build upon these established programs in order to continually expand the scope and impact of systems leadership in California’s education system.

District Leadership Development

The UC Davis Center for Applied Policy in Education connects education policymakers and practitioners from across California to collaboratively align research, practice, and policy. CAP-Ed’s mission is to support equitable education systems that are grounded in empirical research and effective leadership that leads to improved educational outcomes for diverse K–12 students.


Superintendents’ Executive Leadership Forum (SELF)

The SELF program, now in its 14th year, supports collaborative and inquiry-based development of superintendent leadership capacity. Guiding and supporting superintendents using a systems lens, SELF focuses district leadership on the improvement of teaching and learning through an integrated approach to governance, equity, instructional leadership, and novel approaches to leadership capacity building at all levels of the system.

Each year’s cohort of 12–18 superintendents is recruited to participate in the SELF program by their CAP-Ed colleagues and peers. Selection criteria is designed to achieve a diverse cohort of superintendents from large and small, urban, suburban, and rural school districts. SELF provides participants the opportunity to engage in discussions about critical educational issues with educational systems experts and superintendent colleagues.

At the end of each year, SELF alumni superintendents are invited to join the California Superintendents Collaborative Network at UC Davis.

During 2020–21, this highly collaborative forum provided superintendents a valuable platform to work through the many challenges educators faced in light of the pandemic. Guest faculty and topics included:

• Dr. Charles Payne: Equity and Dignity-based Education
• Dr. Michael Fullan: Systems Transformation
• Dr. Meredith Honig: Central Office Transformation & Principal Leadership
• Dr. Steve Ladd: Systems Leadership
• Dr. Davis Campbell: Board Governance
• Dr. Charles Payne: Equity and Dignity-based Education

SELF Superintendent

“SELF provided me two invaluable opportunities. First, to engage first-hand some of the preeminent researchers and analysts within the education community. Second, to provide me a forum for meaningful dialogue with colleagues grappling with the same content within similar contexts. This combination of content and discussion has deepened my ability to infuse effective leadership across our schools.”

SELF Superintendent

How SELF Superintendent

1 District superintendents representing
76,150 students participated in the SELF program in 2020–2021

"At the heart of a learning organization is a shift of mind – from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to connected to the world, from seeing problems as caused by someone or something 'out there' to seeing how our own actions create the problems we experience. A learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality. And how they can change it.”

SELF Superintendent
California Superintendents Collaborative Network

The California Superintendents Collaborative Network, now in its sixth year, includes two cohorts, one serving Northern California superintendents and one serving superintendents in Southern California, in partnership with UC San Diego. The Network extends the learning for cohorts of 12–18 superintendents who wish to further systems improvement and systemwide leadership capacity. The Network develops the professional capabilities of participating superintendents, enhancing leadership proficiencies, and fostering collaborative relationships that support the creation, in each district, of the conditions that lead to improved teaching and learning.

Participating superintendents are deeply committed to creating new, coherent, and effective systems of education in their districts. Collectively, these superintendents have a genuine desire to collaboratively explore a variety of implementation strategies that support the teaching and learning of all students, using a “problems of practice and theories of action” model of inquiry.

The Network aims to strengthen superintendents’ core leadership capabilities in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus in three key ways: enhance systems thinking to see districts as systems in action; work with mental models to have reflective collegial conversations; and focus

The Network is designed to move from the “what” to the “how”, inviting superintendents to:

- Listen critically.
- Engage in deep systems thinking about problems of practice.
- Proactively talk about the work of transforming a school district.
- Promote depth and complexity of learning at all levels of the system.
- Refine and adjust work in districts between sessions, so they come back having tried something and prepared to actively engage in discussions about their current efforts.
- Share perspectives on current legislation and policies in order to help shape new language, or tackle policies that hinder school districts’ educational and learning growth.

The beauty of this network—what I appreciate the most, why I attend every meeting—is that you’ve got a dozen superintendents who are all contributing to addressing a problem. It is incredibly fruitful to hear how others are addressing the same issue.”

Network Superintendent

“...constructing evidence-based action plans to address those needs.

- Initiating and supporting teacher professional learning communities (PLCs).5
- Building teacher leadership capacity.
- Taking effective action to improve student outcomes.

Through the CAPS network, participating principals, along with their teacher leadership teams, join a community of supportive colleagues who build collaborative school leadership.

The Network Superintendent

“I just love this program. I don’t think I’d still be a principal if I hadn’t been coming to these meetings... I’ve got my action plan, I can see I’m making progress, I’m refining it. I can act on it. I feel confident. I’m not focusing on the distractions. It’s completely changed my experience with this work.”

CAPS Principal

California Principals Support Network (CAPS)

2020–2021 concluded the fourth year of CAPS. This was the program’s culmination of four years of grant funding from the Stuart Foundation which supported the work from October 2017 to September 2021. During this time, CAPS provided 182 principals and teacher teams opportunities to enhance instructional efficacy by:

- Developing leadership skills to analyze the needs of their schools.
- Creating evidence-based action plans to address those needs.
- Initiating and supporting teacher professional learning communities (PLCs).5
- Building teacher leadership capacity.
- Taking effective action to improve student outcomes.

Through the CAPS network, participating principals, along with their teacher leadership teams, join a community of supportive colleagues who build collaborative school leadership.

California Institute for School Improvement (CISI)

Education policy is continually being updated, and these changes affect the curriculum and instructional work of all schools in California. CISI supports education leaders by organizing the flow of information on critical issues in education and distributing it in a concise, monthly resource digest.

Distributed to nearly 2,100 administrators from 350 member school districts in California, this e-bulletin summarizes and synthesizes education research and policy that informs policymaking and policy implementation, providing the timely information that leaders need as they perform their day-to-day work in schools.

CISI also brings leaders together through bi-annual workshops to reflect on experiences, share and discuss ideas, and collaborate on improving education at the district and state level.

Launched in the 1970s by Davis Campbell, who at the time served as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and currently serves on the CISI Advisory Board, CISI became a part of CAP-Ed in 2012.

326,000

students participated in the Network program in 2020–2021

31

District superintendents representing

14

Case studies were presented in 2020–2021

2019–2020

Principals and teacher teams participated in the CAPS program in 2020–2021

240

School Leadership Action Plans were developed in the 4 years of CAPS at UC Davis

647

School leaders have benefited from CAPS since it launched, including 260 principals and 387 teachers

2,100

School administrators from 350 member school districts receive the monthly CISI e-bulletin
Leading Statewide Educational Change

Superintendents representing California school districts from as far north as Fortuna and as far south as San Diego are actively engaged in district-wide leadership development that results in impactful, real-world student improvement.

### SELF AT UC DAVIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Superintendent Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buckeye USD</td>
<td>El Dorado</td>
<td>David Roth</td>
<td>4,706</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calaveras USD</td>
<td>Calaveras</td>
<td>Mark Campbell</td>
<td>2,870</td>
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<td>Dublin JUSD</td>
<td>Aumsville</td>
<td>Daniel Moraco</td>
<td>12,575</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Monte City SD</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Marcel Garcia</td>
<td>8,233</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nevada JUHSD</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>Brett W. McFadden</td>
<td>2,596</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Adobe Union</td>
<td>Sonoma</td>
<td>Sonja Lowery</td>
<td>1,909</td>
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<td>Palm Springs USD</td>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>Sandra Lyon</td>
<td>23,103</td>
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<td>Rincon Valley USD</td>
<td>Sonoma</td>
<td>Tracy Smith</td>
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<td>Scottsdale USD</td>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
<td>Tanya Krause</td>
<td>2,470</td>
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<td>Stockton USD</td>
<td>San Joaquin</td>
<td>Brian Biedermann</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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### UC DAVIS NETWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Superintendent Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aromas-San Juan USD</td>
<td>San Benito</td>
<td>Michele Huntington</td>
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<td>Campbell USD</td>
<td>Santa Clara</td>
<td>Shelly Wramrente</td>
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<td>Canyon ESD</td>
<td>Contra Costa</td>
<td>Lucia Sullivan</td>
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<td>Davis JUSD</td>
<td>Yolo</td>
<td>John Bowes</td>
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<td>Eastside UESD</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Joshua Lightle</td>
<td>3,275</td>
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<td>Fortuna GHSD</td>
<td>Humboldt</td>
<td>Glen Senevirastha</td>
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<td>Lake Tahoe USD</td>
<td>El Dorado</td>
<td>Todd Cutler</td>
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<td>Los Molinos USD</td>
<td>Tehama</td>
<td>Joey Adams</td>
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<td>Mark West Union SD</td>
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<td>Ron Calloway</td>
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<td>Moraga ESD</td>
<td>Contra Costa</td>
<td>Bruce Burns</td>
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<td>Oakland USD</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Kyla Johnson-Trammell</td>
<td>60,202</td>
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<td>Ripon USD</td>
<td>San Joaquin</td>
<td>Zogy Robeson</td>
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<td>Sacramento City USD</td>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>Jorge Aguilar</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Benito HSD</td>
<td>San Benito</td>
<td>Shaeen Tenerbaum</td>
<td>3,104</td>
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<td>Santa Clara USD</td>
<td>Santa Clara</td>
<td>Stella Kemp</td>
<td>15,378</td>
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<td>Travis USD</td>
<td>Solano</td>
<td>Pam Conkin</td>
<td>5,495</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vallejo City USD</td>
<td>Solano</td>
<td>William Spalding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yolo COE</td>
<td>Yolo</td>
<td>Garth Lewis</td>
<td>67</td>
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### UC SAN DIEGO NETWORK

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<th>District</th>
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<th>Superintendent Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arcadia USD</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>David Vanasprod</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chula Vista ESD</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Francisco Escobedo</td>
<td>3,0155</td>
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<td>Coronado Unified SD</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Karl Mueller</td>
<td>3,037</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastside Union SD</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Joshua Lightle</td>
<td>3,329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encinitas USD</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>David Fialciano</td>
<td>12,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escondido Union HSD</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Dr. Luis A. Rankins-Ibana</td>
<td>9,513</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laguna Beach USD</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Jason Vitoria</td>
<td>2,788</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakeside Union SD</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Andrew S. Johnson</td>
<td>5,529</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Ysidro USD</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Gina Potter</td>
<td>4,475</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Bay USD</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Kate McNamara</td>
<td>7,199</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temecula USD</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Candace Singh</td>
<td>5,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vista USD</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Matt Doyle</td>
<td>25,843</td>
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In 2020–21, CAP-Ed collaborated with 44 superintendents from school districts serving over 402,000 students statewide.

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I appreciate the hands-on, in-the-moment learning from the leaders of the group as well as the insight from the participating superintendents.”

SELF Superintendent
Enhancing Equity & Education Effectiveness
California Principals’ Support Network (CAPS) Cohorts, 2020–2021

The UC Davis CAPS Network, representing districts from Mendocino to Los Angeles County, supported 95 principals working to improve educational outcomes for California’s K–12 students.

UC DAVIS CAPS NETWORK
Alameda County
LIVEMORE JUSD
Alhambra Creek Elementary: Tanya Adamson
Emma C. Smith Elementary: Joe McQuire
Sunset Elementary: Tom Jones

Contra Costa County
Pittsburg USD
Pittsburg High: Todd Whitmire

Marin County
MILL VALLEY USD
Edna Magurek Elementary: Leo Kostelick
Mill Valley Middle School: Anna Lazzarini, Principal; Lisa Lamer, Dean of Students; Mark Nelson, Assistant Principal
Old Mill Elementary: Jason Maiton
Park Elementary: Aubrey O’Connor
Tam Valley Elementary: Laura Myers
Strawberry Point Elementary: Dr. Kimberly Berman

San Rafael City Schools
Glenwood Elementary: Jason Richardson
Laurel Dell Elementary: Pepe Gonzalez
San Pedro Elementary School: Kristina Hopkins
Sun Valley Elementary: Kim Evans
Venetia Valley: Apolinar Quesada

San Joaquin County
Stockton USD
Flora Arca Mata Elementary: Henry D. Phillips
Hazleton Elementary: Victor Zamora
Madison K–8, Felicia O’Drury-Carr
Sonoma County
COTATI-BENRHAH Park USD
Eagle View Elementary: Jennifer Hansen
John Reed Elementary: Monica Pong
Lawrence Jones Middle School: Melissa Quan
Richard Crane Elementary: Teresa Ruffoni
Thomas Page Academy: Lynzie Beaudin

West Contra Costa County
WEST CONTRA COSTA USD
Dover Elementary: Mandy Rezas
Shannon Elementary: Dan MacDonald
Stewart Elementary: Julie Plesance

Yolo County
DAVIS JUSD
Cesar Chavez Elementary: Veronica Dunn
Davis High: Tom Mckale

Winters USD
Winters Middle School: Phoebe Girimonte

MENDOCINO CAPS NETWORK
Sonoma County
BELLEVUE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Bellevue Elementary: Nina Craig
Kawana Springs Elementary: Denise McCullogh
Meadow View Elementary School: Jean Walker
Taylor Mountain Elementary: Margaret Jacobson

Cloverdale USD
Cloverdale High School: Chris Meredith
Jefferson Elementary: Susan Yakich
Washington Middle School: Mark Lucchetti

Mendocino County
FORT BRAGG USD
Fort Bragg High School: Bruce Trippett
Fort Bragg Middle School: Laura Yeria

VENTURA COUNTY OF EDUCATION CAPS NETWORK
Los Angeles County
Los Angeles USD
El Camino Real Charter High School: David Hussey
Lana Road Elementary: Mario Thompson

Newhall USD
Newhall Elementary: Estefania Aguilar

Saugus Union
Bridgesport Elementary: Carin Fractor
Emekim Elementary: Jenny Quan
Foster (James) Elementary: Mali Covington
Highlands Elementary: Susan Bender
Plum Canyon Elementary: David Stopen
Rios Vista Elementary: Cheryl Cameron
Santa Clarita Elementary: Rose Villanueva

Santa Barbara County
GULF UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Brandon Elementary School: Julie Bolton
El Camino Union Elementary School: Amanda Martinez
Elwood Elementary: Ned Schoenweber
Fort Hill Elementary School: Felicia Roggero
Holister Elementary School: Abby Vazquez
Isa Vista Elementary School: Lorena Reyes
Kellogg Elementary School: Regina Davis
La Palma Elementary School: Catherine Dang
Lana Road Elementary: Mario Thompson
Mountain View Elementary School: Joanna Lauer

Orcutt USD
Orcutt Academy Charter School: Rhett Carter

Ventura County
COLONY VALLEY USD
Colina Middle: Shane Frank

Ojai USD
Mathis Junior High School: Chris Murphy
Meniers Oaks Elementary: Theresa Dutter
Mira Monte Elementary: Katherine White
Northfield High: Dave Monson
San Antonio Elementary: Robin Monson
Topa Topa Elementary: Dawn Darniels

Oxnard Union High
Camarillo (Adolfo) High: Matthew Labelle
Channel Islands High: Roger Adams
Pacific High: Ted Lawrence

Peace Valley USD
Camarillo Heights Elementary: Juana Castro
Las Colinas Middle: Elizabeth Brockett
Monte Vista Middle: Kate Burkhart
Santa Rosa Technology Magnet: Kelly Borchard
Terra Linda Elementary: Robert Waggoner

Simo Valley USD
Wood Ranch Elementary: Kate Snowden

In 2020–21, CAP-Ed collaborated with 95 principals from 25 school districts serving over 65,000 students statewide.

“…just how impactful it can and will be for our students.”
CAPS Principal
Leveraging Policy and Research

Leadership during a Global Pandemic

When the UC Davis campus shifted most operations to remote settings in March 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in California, CAP-Ed moved all programs to a virtual platform. Special sessions were scheduled to support district leaders throughout the summer. Supplemental weekly e-bulletins focused on distance learning and health guidance from the state were sent to more than 2,100 education leaders statewide. One superintendent stated about the program, “It was a lifeline.”

As part of CAP-Ed’s ongoing self-assessment, external program evaluators were engaged to assess program efficacy to 1) map participant experience to programs goals and 2) determine program impact on instructional leadership in participating districts and schools. Session surveys, interviews and articulated plans were analyzed to identify themes and areas of greatest need according to the actual work of leaders engaged in the programs. Importantly, superintendents, principals and teacher teams determine for themselves their areas of greatest need.

Evaluators assert that CAP-Ed’s programs positively impacted superintendent and principal leadership during this unprecedented time. Key features of CAP-Ed’s programs include creating the conditions for educators to foster collegial relationships as they collaboratively explore challenges and opportunities in their work. Consistently, we find that, despite a variety of contexts, the similarities and pooled knowledge of leaders engaged in our programs serves as a tremendous source of inspiration and feedback.

Network superintendents assert that the program impacted them in the following ways:

- **100%** Helped me think through the problem more clearly.
- **100%** Helped me to not feel so alone in addressing similar issues in my district.
- **93%** Helped me to consider alternate ideas and solutions to problems.
- **93%** Supported me in building relationships outside the district.
- **91%** Bringing about change on equity and access issues.
- **91%** Bringing about change on Social Emotional Learning.
- **91%** Bringing about change on Professional Development.

Going through this last year with the Network has really helped—helped me to be more proactive rather than being reactive. It created that space where amongst the chaos I was able to think clearly, think forward. I think the Network really helped me seize the reins.”

Network Superintendent

Investing in the Future of Education

Since 2008, CAP-Ed has received $5.4 million in university, state, and private foundation funding support. During the 2020–2021 academic year, CAP-Ed received $690,000 in investment support for our programs.

The CAP-Ed team is proud to work alongside all of our funding partners who enable us to continue building a connected network of scholars, educators, and policymakers who are dedicated to providing progressive and equitable education solutions for students all across California.

Since 2008, our funding partners have included:
The CAP-Ed Superintendents Network was an opportunity to expand my network and have in-depth conversations about the kind of work we do as superintendents. We don’t typically have these opportunities to discuss issues with one another, have conversations about research, visit other districts, etc.”

Network Superintendent

Having an opportunity to talk to fellow superintendents in a structured setting while being vulnerable—it’s very difficult to do—we’re always watching our backs. But in this setting, it’s truly about, hey, you can share what you’re going through, and you realize that they’re going through the exact same things.”

Network Superintendent

Endnotes