2020–2021 Impact Report

UC DAVIS
Center for Applied
Policy in Education
Of the School of Education

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.

> "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**

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.

CAP-Ed's 2020–2021 programs include the Superintendents' Executive Leadership Forum, California Superintendents Collaborative Network, California Principals Support Network, and California Institute for School Improvement.

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.

13

District superintendents representing

76,150

students participated in the SELF program in 2020–2021

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:

- Davis Campbell: *Board Governance*[1]
- Dr. Michael Fullan: *Systems Transformation*[2]
- Dr. Meredith Honig: *Central Office Transformation & Principal Leadership*[3]
- Dr. Steve Ladd: *Systems Leadership*
- Dr. Charles Payne: *Equity and Dignity-based Education*[4]

> "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**

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 personal vision and shared vision to cultivate a creative orientation with tools to lead districts to drive equitable, high-quality student outcomes.[5]

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.

31

District superintendents representing

326,000

students participated in the Network program in 2020–2021

14

Case studies were presented in 2020–2021

> " 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**

> " It is so crucial to receive a variety of perspectives on key issues from individuals who are in the job of superintendent... Feedback was provided in a way that enabled me to immediately reflect on additional implementation strategies and ideas."
> **Network Superintendent**

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).[6]
- 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.

182

Principals and teachers participated in the CAPS program in 2020–2021

240

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

> " 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**

647

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

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.

2,100

School administrators from

350

member school districts receive the monthly CISI e-bulletin

Leading Statewide Educational Change

Superintendents' Executive Leadership Forum (SELF) and California Superintendents Collaborative Network (Network) Cohorts, 2020–2021

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

Buckeye UESD
El Dorado
David Roth
4,706

El Monte City SD
Los Angeles
Maribel Garcia
8,233

Nevada JUHSD
Nevada
Brett W. McFadden
2,596

Rincon Valley USD
Sonoma
Tracy Smith
3,307

Scotts Valley USD
Santa Cruz
Tanya Krause
2,470

Calaveras USD
Calaveras
Mark Campbell
2,870

Encinitas USD
San Diego
Andree Grey
5,319

Old Adobe Union
Sonoma
Sonjhia Lowery
1,909

Roseville JUHSD
Placer
Jess Borjon
10,282

Stockton USD
San Joaquin
Brian Biedermann
40,000

Dublin JUESD
Alameda
Daniel Moirao
12,575

Geyserville USD
Sonoma
Deborah Bertolucci
237

Palm Springs USD
Riverside
Sandra Lyon
23,103

● UC DAVIS NETWORK

Aromas-San Juan USD
San Benito
Michele Huntoon
1,087

Lake Tahoe USD
El Dorado
Todd Cutler
3,872

Sacramento City USD
Sacramento
Jorge Aguilar
46,933

Campbell USD
Santa Clara
Shelly Viramontez
7,273

Los Molinos USD
Tehama
Joey Adame
555

San Benito HSD
San Benito
Shawn Tennenbaum
3,108

Canyon ESD
Contra Costa
Lucia Sullivan
72

Mark West Union SD
Sonoma
Ron Calloway
1,444

Santa Clara USD
Santa Clara
Stella Kemp
15,378

Davis JUSD
Yolo
John Bowes
8,587

Moraga ESD
Contra Costa
Bruce Burns
1,851

Travis USD
Solano
Pam Conklin
5,495

Eastside UESD
Los Angeles
Josh Lightle
3,275

Oakland USD
Alameda
Kyla Johnson-Trammell
50,202

Vallejo City USD
Solano
William Spalding
14,736

Fortuna UHSD
Humboldt
Glen Senestraro
1,107

Ripon USD
San Joaquin
Ziggy Robeson
4,628

Yolo COE
Yolo
Garth Lewis
67

● UC SAN DIEGO NETWORK

Arcadia USD
Los Angeles
David Vanasdall
9,357

Laguna Beach USD
Orange
Jason Viloria
2,788

Chula Vista ESD
San Diego
Francisco Escobedo
30,135

Lakeside Union SD
San Diego
Andrew S. Johnson
5,529

Coronado Unified SD
San Diego
Karl Mueller
3,037

San Ysidro USD
San Diego
Gina Potter
4,475

Eastside Union SD
Los Angeles
Joshua Lightle
3,329

San Ysidro USD
San Diego
Gina Potter
4,475

Encinitas Union SD
San Diego
David Feliciano
12,587

South Bay USD
San Diego
Katie McNamara
7,199

Escondido Union HSD
San Diego
Dr. Luis A. Rankins-Ibarra
9,513

Temecula USD
San Diego
Candace Singh
5,043

La Mesa-Spring Valley
San Diego
David Feliciano
5,043

Vista USD
San Diego
Matt Doyle
25,843
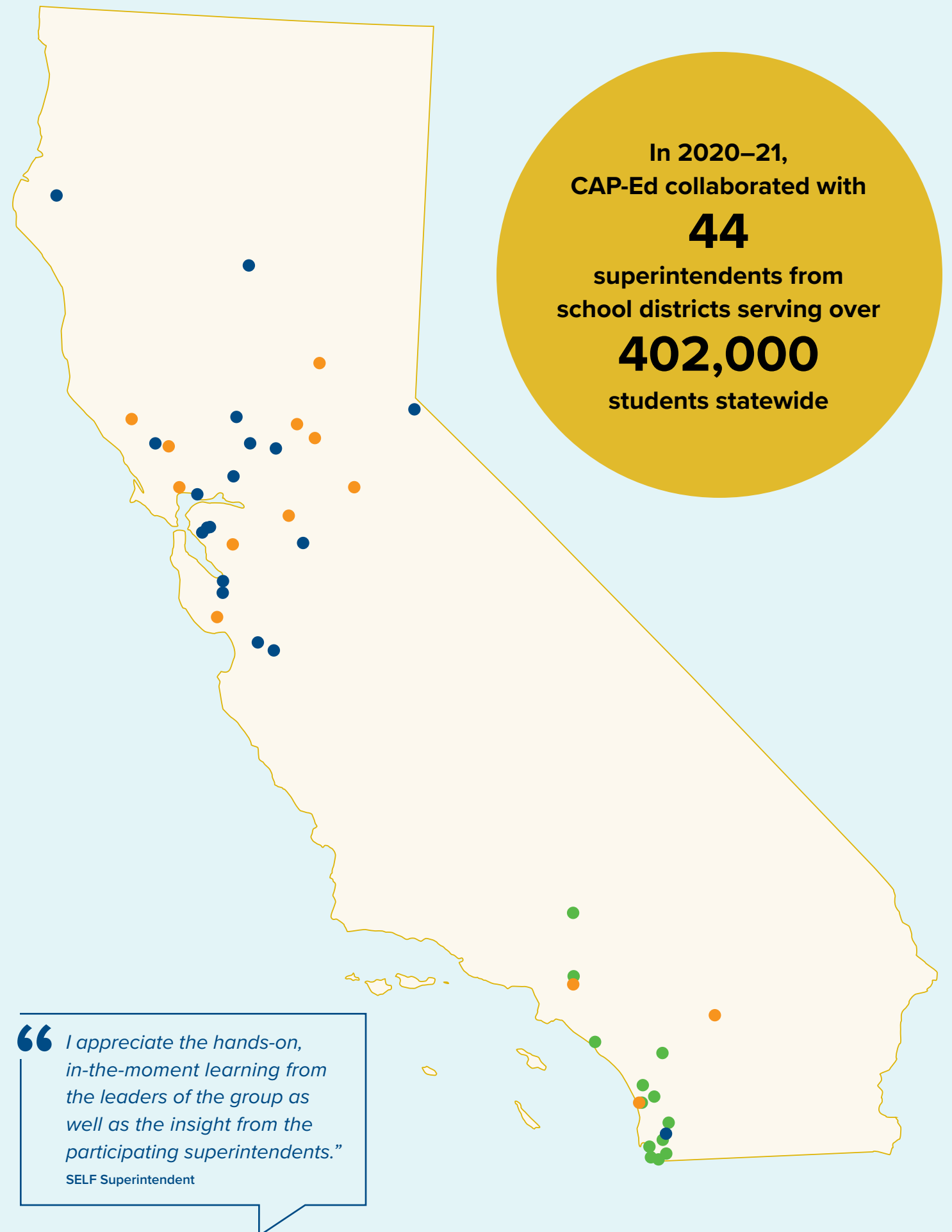
In 2020–21, CAP-Ed collaborated with **44** superintendents from school districts serving over **402,000** students statewide

> " *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.
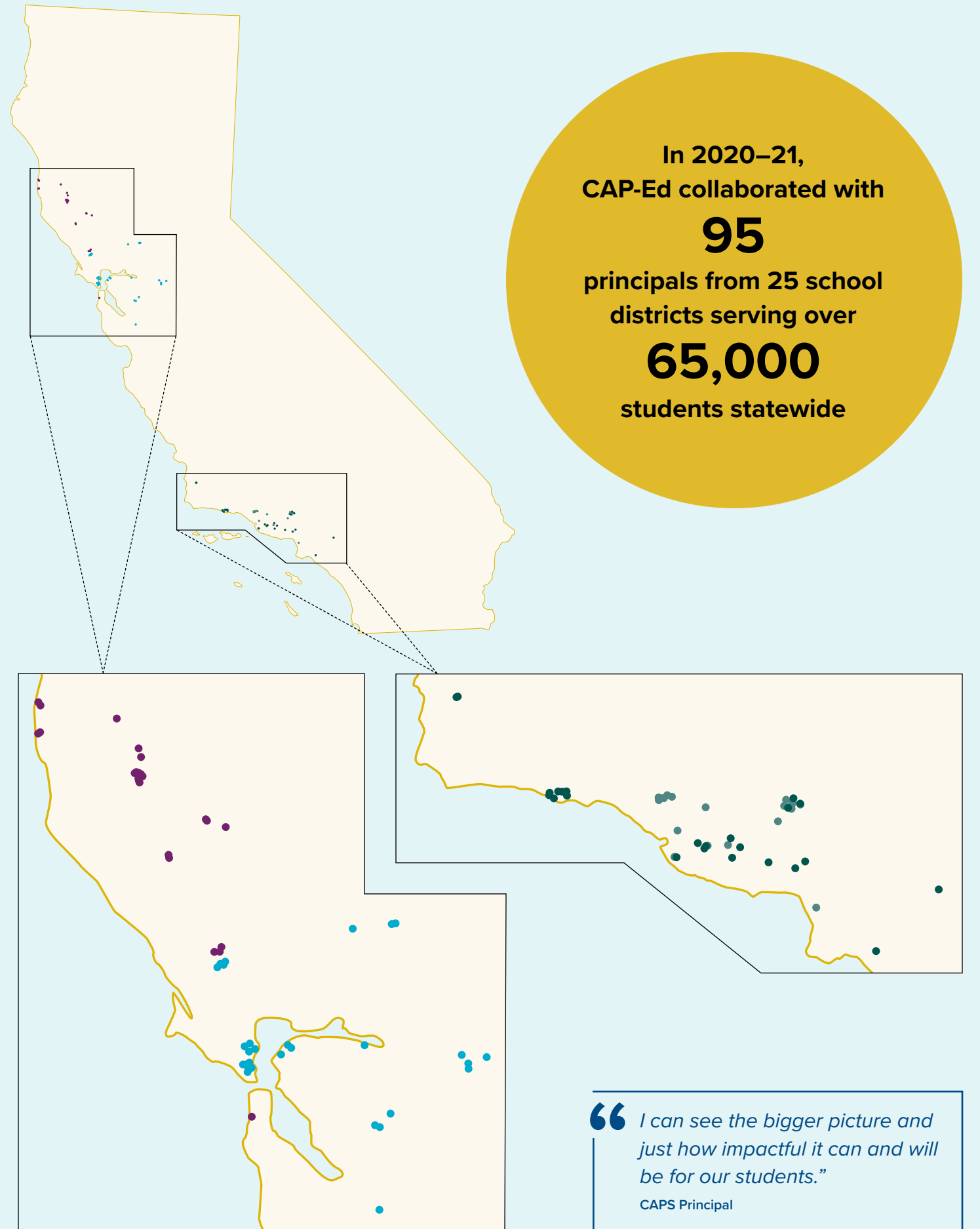
● UC DAVIS CAPS NETWORK

Alameda County
Livermore JUSD
Altamont Creek Elementary: Tara Aderman
Emma C. Smith Elementary: Joe Meunier
Sunset Elementary: Tom Jones

Contra Costa County
Pittsburg USD
Pittsburg High: Todd Whitmire

Marin County
Mill Valley USD
Edna Maguire Elementary: Leo Kostelnik
Mill Valley Middle School: Anna Lazzarini,
 Principal; Lisa Lamar, Dean of Students;
 Mark Nelson, Assistant Principal
Old Mill Elementary: Jason Matlon
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
Hazelton Elementary: Victor Zamora
Madison K–8: Felicia O Bailey-Carr

Sonoma County
Cotati-Rohnert Park USD
Evergreen Elementary: Jennifer Hansen
John Reed Elementary: Monica Fong
Lawrence Jones Middle School: Melissa Quinn
Richard Crane Elementary: Teresa Ruffoni
Thomas Page Academy: Lynzie Brodhun

West Contra Costa County
West Contra Costa USD
Dover Elementary: Melynda Piezas
Shannon Elementary: Dan MacDonald
Stewart Elementary: Julie Plaisance

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

Winters JUSD
Winters Middle School Phoebe Girimonte

● MENDOCINO CAPS NETWORK

Sonoma County
Bellevue Union School District
Bellevue Elementary: Nina Craig
Kawana Springs Elementary: Denise McCullough
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 Triplett
Fort Bragg Middle School: Lura Vieira

Mendocino USD
Mendocino High School: Tobin Hahn
Mendocino K–8 School: Kim Humrichouse

Ukiah USD
Calpella Elementary: Tina Burrell
Eagle Peak Middle School: Dan Stearns
Grace Hudson Elementary: Kara Blanco
Nokomis Elementary: Tom Rawles
Oak Manor Elementary: Kim Sevilla
Pomolita Middle School: Bryan Barrett
Ukiah Adult School: Christy Smith (Pedroncelli)
Ukiah High School: Gordon Oslund
Ukiah Independent Study Academy: Scott Paulin
Yokayo Elementary School: Dana Milani

Willits Charter School
Willits Charter School: Jennifer Lockwood

VENTURA COUNTY OF EDUCATION CAPS NETWORK   ● YEAR 1   ● YEAR 2

Los Angeles County
Los Angeles USD
El Camino Real Charter High School: David Hussey
Lanai Road Elementary: Mario Thompson

Newhall USD
Newhall Elementary: Ernestina Aguilar

Saugus Union
Bridgeport Elementary: Carin Fractor
Emblem Elementary: Jenny Quan
Foster (James) Elementary: Misty Covington
Highlands Elementary: Susan Bender
Plum Canyon Elementary: David Stepner
Rio Vista Elementary: Cheryl Cameron
Santa Clarita Elementary: Rose Villanueva

Santa Barbara County
Goleta Union Elementary
Brandon Elementary School: Julie Bolton
El Camino Elementary School: Amanda Martinez
Ellwood Elementary: Ned Schoenwetter
Foothill Elementary School: Felicia Roggero
Hollister Elementary School: Abby Vasquez
Isla Vista Elementary School: Lorena Reyes
Kellogg Elementary School: Regina Davis
La Patera Elementary School: Celeste Darga
Lanai Road Elementary: Mario Thompson
Mountain View Elementary School: Joanna Lauer

Orcutt Union Elementary
Orcutt Academy Charter School: Rhett Carter

Ventura County
Conejo Valley USD
Colina Middle: Shane Frank

Ojai USD
Matilija Junior High: Chris Murphy
Meiners Oaks Elementary: Theresa Dutter
Mira Monte Elementary: Katherine White
Nordhoff High: Dave Monson
San Antonio Elementary: Robin Monson
Topa Topa Elementary: Dawn Damianos

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

Pleasant Valley USD
Camarillo Heights Elementary: Juanita Castro
Las Colinas Middle: Elizabeth Brockett
Monte Vista Middle: Katie Burchell
Santa Rosa Technology Magnet: Kelly Borchard
Tierra Linda Elementary: Robert Waggoner

Simi 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

> " I can see the bigger picture and 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 innovation toward more equitable and effective learning systemwide. To that end, structured processes for applying empirical research to leadership practice in educational settings ensure that progress is measured and adapted as necessary. Further, leaders gain insights into the complex systems work of educational leadership.

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**

30

Policy/Research briefs and program evaluations have been developed by CAP-Ed policy fellows, graduate student researchers and research affiliates since 2008, including:

California's Special Education Teacher Shortage is Getting Worse
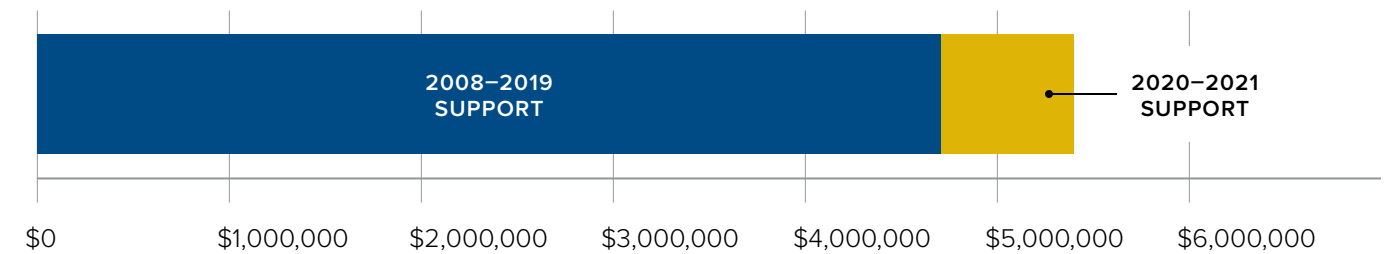Marshall Comia
Center for Applied Policy in Education (2021)

Harnessing the Power of Collective Inquiry
School Administrator
Christina Murdoch, John Glaser, and Steve Ladd
AASA, The School Superintendent Association (2021)
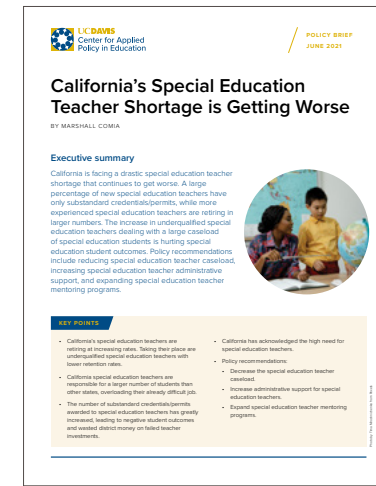
Investing in the Future of Education

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.

| 2008–2019 SUPPORT | 2020–2021 SUPPORT |

$0 $1,000,000 $2,000,000 $3,000,000 $4,000,000 $5,000,000 $6,000,000

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:

CALIFORNIA CENTER ON TEACHING CAREERS (CalEd Grant)

CORWIN A SAGE Publishing Company

THE DIRK AND CHARLENE Kabcenell Foundation

STUART FOUNDATION — IMPROVING LIFE OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH EDUCATION

TIDES Transformative Inquiry Design for Effective Schools and Systems

UC DAVIS

UC San Diego

UCDAVIS
Center for Applied
Policy in Education

University of California, Davis
School of Education
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CAP-Ed Executive Director Christina E. Murdoch
and Senior Policy Fellow Davis Campbell.

CAP-ED TEAM

Christina E. Murdoch, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Amy Liedstrand
Program Coordinator

Dahlia Chavez
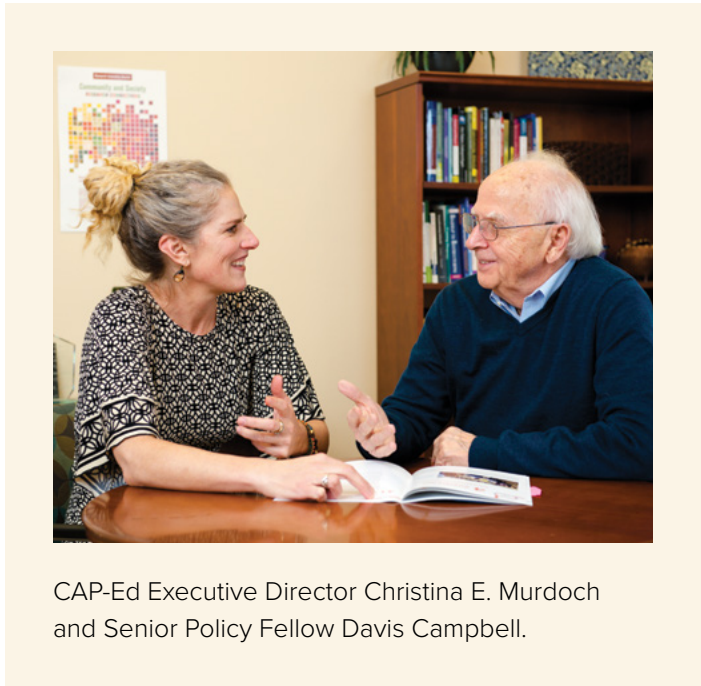Undergraduate Student Assistant

Hamsaa Kaarthik
Undergraduate Student Assistant

POLICY FELLOWS

Davis Campbell
Senior Policy Fellow

Steven Ladd
Policy Fellow

Tom Timar
Senior Policy Fellow &
Professor Emeritus

> *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

1. Campbell, D. W., & Fullan, M. (2019). *The governance core: School boards, superintendents, and schools working together.* Corwin.
2. Fullan, M. (2019). *Nuance: Why some leaders succeed and others fail.* Corwin.
3. Honig, M. I., & Rainlet, L. R. (2020). *Supervising principals for instructional leadership: A teaching and learning approach.* Harvard Education Press.
4. Payne, C. M. (2007). *I've got the Light of Freedom: The organizing tradition and the Mississippi freedom struggle.* University of California Press.
5. Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization.* Doubleday.
6. Many, T. W., Sparks-Many, S. K., & DuFour, R. (2015). *Leverage: Using PLCs to promote lasting improvement in schools.* Corwin.