



CalAPA
California Administrator
Performance Assessment



Performance Assessment Overview

Overview of Leadership Cycles and Rubrics

Version 08

Copyright © 2025 by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
May Lee State Office Complex, 651 Bannon Street, Suite 600, Sacramento, CA 95811
All rights reserved.

All materials contained herein are protected by United States copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast without the prior written permission of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice from copies of the content. Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited other than the following:

- you may print or download to a local hard disk extracts for your personal and non-commercial use only
- you may copy the content to individual third parties for their personal use, but only if you acknowledge the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing as the source and copyright owner of the material

Contents

Introduction to CalAPA Leadership Cycles 1
 Assessment Design..... 1

Evidence Tables 3
 Leadership Cycle 1: Analyzing Data to Inform School Improvement and Promote Equity ... 3
 Leadership Cycle 2: Facilitating Communities of Practice 5
 Leadership Cycle 3: Supporting Teacher Growth 7

Rubric Essential Questions..... 9
 Leadership Cycle 1: Analyzing Data to Inform School Improvement and Promote Equity 9
 Leadership Cycle 2: Facilitating Communities of Practice 10
 Leadership Cycle 3: Supporting Teacher Growth 11

Introduction to CalAPA Leadership Cycles

In 2000, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) began a comprehensive effort to update and revise standards, policies, and regulations relating to the licensure of school administrators and the accreditation of the programs that prepare school administrators. This effort has been motivated by advancements in both the research regarding and practices of effective school administrators and by the complex needs of California's public schools at the dawn of the 21st century.

Based on 20 years of experience improving the design and use of performance assessment as one of multiple measures to inform teacher candidate preparedness, in September 2013, the Commission amended the requirements for earning the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential to include the passage of a performance assessment along with the successful completion of a CTC-approved administrator preparation program.

Assessment Design

Since 2016, the CTC has engaged a 15-member design team of practitioners and administrative educators, including representatives from the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), California Association of Professors of Educational Administration (CAPEA), California Teachers Association (CTA), and the California Department of Education. Along with assessment development experts from the CTC and the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson, the team has designed an assessment system called the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA).

The CalAPA has been purposefully structured to address the state's Administrator Performance Assessment Design and Program Implementation Standards as well as key elements of the California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPE). The CAPE are aligned with the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL). Adopted by the CTC in June 2016, the CAPE provide the conceptual and practical basis for the following three leadership cycles that comprise the CalAPA, with a focus on organizational development, change management, and leadership.

- ❖ Leadership Cycle 1: Analyzing Data to Inform School Improvement and Promote Equity
- ❖ Leadership Cycle 2: Facilitating Communities of Practice
- ❖ Leadership Cycle 3: Supporting Teacher Growth

Each leadership cycle includes four inquiry oriented steps: (1) investigate, (2) plan, (3) act, and (4) reflect. The Commission's CalAPA model provides an overarching conceptual framework of progressively interrelated cognitive steps to help guide and refine the administrative candidate's thinking and encourage decision-making throughout each cycle.

The CalAPA is intended to provide both a formal assessment of candidate administrative ability and a framework of performance-based guidance during the candidate's administrator preparation program to inform candidate preparation and continued professional growth through induction. Analytic feedback provided at the completion of each cycle will facilitate data-driven collaboration and reflection by the candidate in preparing for subsequent assessment cycles. Performance data will be shared with institutions to assist them in making program improvements and will guide induction programs as they work with new administrators to individualize learning plans. The CalAPA is designed to be embedded within the field placement of an administrator preparation program so that the candidate may draw on authentic evidence of equitable leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities from clinical practice.

The three leadership cycles were developed to build on each other, but may be completed independently and in any order deemed appropriate by an administrator preparation program.

Evidence Tables

The following tables provide a summary of the expectations of candidates completing the CalAPA, including what actions should be taken and what evidence should be submitted by step.

Leadership Cycle 1: Analyzing Data to Inform School Improvement and Promote Equity

| Cycle Step | What You Need to Do | Evidence to Be Submitted |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Step 1: Investigate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the vision, mission, and/or goals at your school and document your findings. Choose a California state indicator of interest (Chronic Absenteeism, Suspension Rate, English Learner Progress, Graduation Rate, Academic Performance, College/Career Readiness). Collect and analyze related quantitative data for this indicator for the school across the three most recent years of data (most recent year, second most recent year, and third most recent year). Identify and select one specific group of students to further investigate (e.g., female English learners). Identify, collect, and analyze three sources of qualitative data to further investigate the equity issues for this student group. Based on your analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data, conduct an equity gap analysis, citing research, for the student group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part A: Data Tables and Written Narrative: Data Collection and Equity Gap Analysis (up to 5 pages of responses to prompts, exclusive of data tables) |
| Step 2: Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on your equity gap analysis, determine potential contributing factors (institutional and/or structural) influencing the equity gap you have identified for your selected group of students. Based on the potential contributing factors you have determined for the group of students, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> identify a related educational area of need at the school, and develop a problem statement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part B: Written Narrative: Contributing Factors and Problem Statement (up to 5 pages) |
| Step 3: Act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the problem statement and identified area of educational need, develop potential strategies for equitable student and school improvement. Solicit targeted feedback from a key educational partner(s) regarding the feasibility of your proposed strategies to address the single equity gap for a group of students. Explain how you would adjust your proposed strategies for equitable student and school improvement based on the targeted feedback you received. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part C: Written Narrative: Planning for School Improvement and Promoting Equity (up to 5 pages) |

(Continued)

| Cycle Step | What You Need to Do | Evidence to Be Submitted |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Step 4: Reflect | <p>Reflect on your work in Leadership Cycle 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well did your leadership capacity allow you to identify potential contributing factors and strategies to address a single equity gap for a group of students at the school? • What strengths would you like to further develop in this area of equitable leadership? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part D: Reflective Narrative (up to 5 pages of written or up to 5 minutes of video explanation) |

Leadership Cycle 2: Facilitating Communities of Practice

| Cycle Step | What You Need to Do | Evidence to Be Submitted |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Step 1: Investigate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquire about and describe the current professional learning context and investigate the role of collaborative professional learning and/or communities of practice in your context. Based on available student data, identify an educational focus for collaborative professional learning that could positively impact student learning and/or well-being. Based on the area of educational focus, select an appropriate group of 3 to 5 educators from your context to serve as a new community of practice or invite an existing community of practice to engage in professional learning with you for this cycle. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part A: Written Narrative: Context, Area of Educational Focus, Community of Practice (up to 5 pages) |
| Step 2: Plan | <p>Hold a planning meeting with the group (3 to 5 educators):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an agenda for the planning meeting using the optional template provided or a locally provided document. Record minutes during the meeting, describing what was discussed and the next steps on the optional template provided or on a locally provided document. Agree upon a problem of practice within or from the area of educational focus based on relevant data and the vision, mission, and/or goals of your professional context, and discuss the rationale for selecting this problem of practice. Jointly select one relevant evidence-based strategy to address the agreed-upon problem of practice to support student learning and/or well-being. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part B: Planning Meeting Agenda (use optional template or locally provided format) (up to 5 pages) Part C: Planning Meeting Minutes (use optional template or locally provided format) (up to 5 pages) Part D: Written Narrative: Identifying a Problem of Practice and a Strategy to Address It (up to 4 pages) |

(Continued)

| Cycle Step | What You Need to Do | Evidence to Be Submitted |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Step 3: Act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the evidence-based strategy with the group over several weeks. During this time, facilitate at least 3 implementation meetings (in addition to the first planning meeting in Step 2) to learn about the evidence-based strategy and support the group and individual members to implement the strategy to address the problem of practice (student learning and/or well-being). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an agenda for each meeting, using either the template or a locally prepared document, that outlines the topics to be discussed. At the same time, take minutes that record the group's jointly determined actions and agreements. Collect key collaborative work products used during the meetings. Video record all meetings. Select 3 video clips. Provide commentary (what you are doing and why) for each video clip. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part E: Agendas for Implementation Meetings (for at least 3 meetings) (use optional template or locally provided format) Part F: Minutes for Implementation Meetings (for at least 3 meetings) (use optional template or locally provided format) Part G: Key Collaborative Work Products (up to 10 pages) Part H: 3 Video Clips from the Implementation Meetings (up to 5 minutes each) Part I: Commentary for the 3 Video Clips from the Implementation Meetings (written, up to 8 pages; OR up to 10 minutes of verbal or ASL commentary) |
| Step 4: Reflect | Referencing implementation results and community of practice member feedback, analyze your experience facilitating a community of practice and implementing an evidence-based strategy, including your personal leadership skills, practices, and growth areas. Reflect on your learning and equitable leadership development from throughout Cycle 2. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part J: Reflective Narrative (written, up to 4 pages; OR up to 6 minutes of verbal or ASL explanation) |

Leadership Cycle 3: Supporting Teacher Growth

| Cycle Step | What You Need to Do | Evidence to Be Submitted |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Step 1: Investigate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize yourself with, describe, and analyze the current teacher coaching, observation, and/or instructional feedback practices at the school and review the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). Describe how the CSTP (or its equivalent) are used at this school to support teacher growth and development. Identify a volunteer teacher for the coaching cycle and learn about the teacher's classroom context and students. Explain the implications for this cycle based on the analysis of the current role of coaching practices (at the school) and the background and experience of the volunteer teacher. Provide a summary of the context and the teacher's prior experiences with coaching, observation, and/or instructional feedback to plan for the coaching cycle. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part A: Written Narrative: Coaching, Observation, and/or Instructional Feedback Practices at the School and the Volunteer Teacher (up to 5 pages) |
| Step 2: Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, participate in, and video record a pre-observation meeting with the volunteer teacher. After the volunteer teacher's self-assessment of instructional practices, jointly select one or two CSTP elements as a focus for the lesson observation and post-observation meeting. Review and collect a copy of the lesson plan to be observed and co-determine student work products that you will be able to review as an outcome of the lesson. Select 2 video clips from the pre-observation meeting that provide evidence of your coaching. Provide commentary (what you are doing and why) for each video clip. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part B: Written Narrative: Classroom Context, Lesson, and Observation (up to 4 pages) Part C: Volunteer Teacher's Lesson Plan, Including Student Work Product Description Part D: 2 Video Clips of the Pre-Observation Meeting (up to 6 minutes each) Part E: Commentary of the Pre-Observation Meeting (written, up to 8 pages; OR up to 10 minutes of verbal or ASL commentary) |

(Continued)

| Cycle Step | What You Need to Do | Evidence to Be Submitted |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Step 3: Act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct and video record a classroom observation of the teacher's lesson. Follow all district policies regarding the video recording of students and teachers and secure all required permissions. Prepare for the post-observation meeting. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the video recording of the lesson. Analyze the CSTP-focused observation evidence you collected during the lesson. Analyze student work products from the lesson and/or any other data related to the lesson. Facilitate a post-observation meeting with the volunteer teacher and video record the meeting. During the post-observation meeting, together with the volunteer teacher, watch the video of the lesson, review the CSTP–element-focused data collected during the observation, and analyze student work and/or other data related to the lesson. Select 1 to 3 video clips from the post-observation meeting that provide evidence of your coaching. Provide commentary (what you are doing and why) for each video clip. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part F: Specific Notes from the Observation and/or Forms Used to Document the Observation Evidence Related to the CSTP Element(s) Part G: Student Work Product Example(s) from the Lesson Used in the Post-Observation Meeting Part H: 1 to 3 Video Clips of the Post-Observation Meeting (up to 15 minutes total of video; a single clip should be at least 1 minute in length) Part I: Commentary of the Post-Observation Meeting (written, up to 8 pages; OR up to 10 minutes of verbal or ASL commentary) |
| Step 4: Reflect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on your learning and leadership development in relation to your coaching and observation abilities to support teacher growth. Discuss how coaching, observation, and/or instructional feedback support teachers at the school site. Describe continuous improvement steps for supporting teacher growth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part J: Reflective Narrative (written, up to 4 pages; OR up to 6 minutes of verbal or ASL explanation) |

Rubric Essential Questions

For each cycle, rubrics are aligned to the specified steps of the leadership cycle (investigate, plan, act, and reflect). Each rubric is framed by an essential question that outlines the knowledge, skills, and abilities assessed within the rubric. The tables below list the essential questions for the CalAPA rubrics contained in each leadership cycle. Refer to the rubrics in each leadership cycle guide for performance level descriptors and alignment to the CAPE.

Leadership Cycle 1: Analyzing Data to Inform School Improvement and Promote Equity

| Step 1: Investigate | |
|---------------------|--|
| Rubric 1.1 | Based on the chosen California state indicator, how well does the candidate select and analyze quantitative data sources across the three most recent years, identify patterns and/or trends related to equity, and choose an appropriate student group? |
| Rubric 1.2 | How does the candidate collect and analyze a range of at least three qualitative data sources and explain their relation to quantitative data findings and the student group equity issue? |
| Rubric 1.3 | How does the candidate conduct an equity gap analysis based on the chosen California state indicator to inform their understanding of the equity issues for a student group? How does this equity gap link to the school's vision, mission, and/or goals? |
| Step 2: Plan | |
| Rubric 1.4 | How does the candidate determine contributing factors, including institutional and/or structural factors, that created or added to the identified equity gap affecting a student group and cite the research supporting their determination? |
| Rubric 1.5 | How does the candidate use the equity gap analysis and identification of potential contributing factors to develop a feasible problem statement related to student achievement and/or well-being? |
| Step 3: Act | |
| Rubric 1.6 | Are the strategy(ies) proposed for equitable school improvement for the student group well informed by the findings of the equity gap analysis, including contributing factors, and responsive to the problem statement? Is proposed strategy(ies) aligned to the school's vision, mission, and/or goals? |
| Rubric 1.7 | How does the candidate apply the feedback received from educational partners familiar with the school culture and context and describe next steps for creating educational partner buy-in and potential implications for the adjusted set of strategy(ies)? |
| Step 4: Reflect | |
| Rubric 1.8 | How does the candidate reflect on and analyze what they have learned about equity-driven leadership in Cycle 1 (citing evidence from Steps 1, 2, and/or 3) and how, based on the school contexts, they might address a single equity gap for a group of students at the school? How does the candidate reflect on their own strengths and areas for growth as an equity-driven leader to address equity needs for the identified group(s) of students at their chosen school? |

Leadership Cycle 2: Facilitating Communities of Practice

| Step 1: Investigate | |
|---------------------|--|
| Rubric 2.1 | How does the candidate describe and analyze the role of current practices of collaborative professional learning in their professional context and how these practices relate to student learning and/or well-being? |
| Rubric 2.2 | How does the candidate select an area of educational focus based on student data that corresponds to the vision, mission, and/or goals of their professional context? How does the candidate choose a group of educators to participate in a community of practice in relation to the selected area of educational focus? |
| Step 2: Plan | |
| Rubric 2.3 | Using the agreed-upon area of educational focus as a starting point, how does the candidate work collaboratively with the group to review data sets and select a problem of practice related to student learning and/or well-being? How does the candidate work with the group members to acknowledge that the problem of practice might be addressed with a change in current instructional practice in their professional context? |
| Rubric 2.4 | How does the candidate explain the collaborative process used during the planning meeting to select one relevant evidence-based strategy to address the selected problem of practice? How does the candidate describe the potential impact of the strategy on student learning and/or well-being? |
| Step 3: Act | |
| Rubric 2.5 | How does the candidate demonstrate and analyze a variety of their facilitation skills of group learning—including documenting group decisions, supporting diverse viewpoints, and/or maintaining group focus and energy—while facilitating a collaborative process of group consensus, feedback, and progress during the three implementation meetings? |
| Rubric 2.6 | How does the candidate facilitate a discussion that leads to a consensual understanding of initial implementation results? How does the candidate collaboratively lead the group in jointly determining next steps? |
| Step 4: Reflect | |
| Rubric 2.7 | How does the candidate reflect upon initial implementation results and feedback from the group to analyze their leadership skills and practices to make specific connections to their areas for growth and identify next steps, citing specific evidence from any of the four steps? How does the candidate demonstrate a variety of leadership skills used to equitably facilitate a community of practice? |

Leadership Cycle 3: Supporting Teacher Growth

| Step 1: Investigate | |
|---------------------|---|
| Rubric 3.1 | How does the candidate describe and analyze the current role of teacher coaching, observation, and/or instructional feedback practices at the school with the volunteer teacher, and explain the implications of how current practices impact their approach to conducting a coaching cycle? |
| Step 2: Plan | |
| Rubric 3.2 | How does the candidate demonstrate and analyze their ability to listen to and talk with the volunteer teacher to understand the learning goals, classroom context, and student assets and learning needs; jointly select with the volunteer teacher one or two CSTP elements, including evidence to be collected; and plan for the observation? |
| Step 3: Act | |
| Rubric 3.3 | How does the candidate recognize, document, and analyze the volunteer teacher's qualities of teaching practice related to the selected CSTP element(s) and learning goals of the lesson? |
| Rubric 3.4 | How does the candidate demonstrate and analyze their ability to foster a learning conversation in a post-observation meeting using CSTP-focused observation evidence, lesson observation video, and student work with the volunteer teacher regarding strengths and area(s) for growth? |
| Rubric 3.5 | In partnership with the volunteer teacher, how does the candidate demonstrate and analyze their ability to co-determine next steps for professional growth, including resources and additional coaching support based on the CSTP-related evidence during the post-observation meeting? |
| Step 4: Reflect | |
| Rubric 3.6 | How does the candidate analyze their capacity to conduct a CSTP-focused coaching and observation process, based on their experience in this coaching cycle and feedback from the volunteer teacher, and cite evidence to demonstrate their ability to facilitate and maintain a coaching partnership? |
| Rubric 3.7 | How does the candidate, informed by a continuous improvement mindset and focused on equitable leadership, reflect on the potential impact of coaching and explain the benefits to both teachers and students? |