



**Berkeley** Graduate School  
of Education  
PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

# **Improving Leader Retention and Self Efficacy through Induction: PLI Leadership Support Program's Promising Results**

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### **Introduction**

Founded in 1999, the Principal Leadership Institute (PLI) at the University of California, Berkeley, has three areas of work: aspiring leader preparation, early career leader induction, and professional learning support of a diverse community of equity focused leaders who will improve education for vulnerable and historically underserved students in California. Fifteen years ago, Berkeley PLI began the practice of leader induction as an innovative model for early career support. Originally designed as an invitational and voluntary continuation of the preparation program, the current mission of PLI's Leadership Support Program (LSP), is to induct a diverse community of equity focused school leaders who will improve education for vulnerable and historically underserved students in California's public schools in support of social justice. In total, LSP has inducted over 300 leaders in California to earn the Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential or full administrative licensure. In the last five years alone (2014-2019), LSP participants worked in over 50 districts or local educational agencies in California.

The pioneering work of Berkeley PLI positioned the program to anticipate and support the implementation of a key new policy that mandated leader induction for all new administrators in California. Specifically, in 2014, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC), an agency in the Executive Branch of California State Government that serves as a state standards board for educator preparation for the public schools of California, approved dramatic shifts in licensure for school leaders in the state by mandating a two-year leader induction program as the single pathway to obtaining full administrative licensure. This was a radical departure from the prior requirements that were more flexible and less time consuming. The purpose of this new policy was to address important concerns posed by then State Superintendent of Instruction Tom

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Torlakson who stated in his report *Greatness by Design* that “With its pioneering [Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment] program, California has been a national leader in developing mentoring programs for beginning teachers. In its early years, this program was shown to reduce attrition and improve teacher competence... [yet] in comparison to other states, California has lagged in supporting school leaders (p.42).”

Since Berkeley PLI already had an established model, it immediately became a strong contributor and resource to other programs throughout California. In fact, five years ago when the CCTC mandated leader induction, the two Principal Leadership Institutes, Berkeley and UCLA, initiated an unprecedented partnership between the sister campuses to expand LSP to the Los Angeles region. Through five years of collaboration, the programs have extended the original LSP program to create a statewide model for leader induction that has two pathways: in person and hybrid online (in the hybrid online pathway, approximately 65% of the program activities are completed in-person and the other 35% are completed via video conferencing).

LSP is supporting 73 early career leaders across California in the 2018-2019 school year. Like the preparation program, LSP inducts a racially diverse leadership workforce. Of the current participants, 10 are African-American, 15 are Latinx, 6 are Asian-American, 28 are White, 9 are mixed ethnicity, and 5 are other or declined to state. Nearly three quarters of the students are female while the rest are male:

	LSP – UC Berkeley	LSP – UCLA	Total/Total Percentage
Female	31	23	54 (74%)
Male	9	10	19 (26%)
African-American	3	7	10 (14%)

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Latinx	6	9	15 (21%)
Asian-American	2	4	6 (8%)
White	22	6	28 (38%)
Mixed ethnicity	2	7	9 (12%)
Other/declined	4	1	5 (7%)

Additionally, 39 participants are working as assistant principals, 9 as principals, and 25 as district or site administrators. 18 work in charter schools versus 55 in public school districts:

	LSP – UC Berkeley	LSP – UCLA	Total/Total Percentage
Principal	5	4	9 (12%)
Asst. Principal	19	20	39 (54%)
Administrator	16	9	25 (34%)
Charter	7	11	18 (25%)
Public District	33	22	55 (75%)

Overall satisfaction rates for the program are extremely high. For example, from end of program surveys administered in 2014 through 2017, 84% of respondents<sup>1</sup> rated their overall induction experience as Mostly Satisfied (4 of 5) or Very Satisfied (5 of 5). In addition, when

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<sup>1</sup> Response rates averaged 57% over the four years.

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respondents were asked about the impact of LSP on their personal development as a leader, 82% of respondents over four years agreed that the program had substantially (4 of 5) or tremendously (5 of 5) influenced their development.

### **Study Focus**

Leader induction has the potential to strengthen the education leader work force at large (Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). However, it is not well-studied or well documented. What components of induction can reduce attrition and develop leader competence as outlined in the intent of the policy? In this paper, we describe how a robust and effectively designed program such as LSP shows promise in positively impacting two critical areas: retention and self-efficacy. Because the field at large continues to grapple with conceptualizing leader induction as well as understanding the programmatic structures and design, this paper will also provide a description of the design and theoretical underpinnings of a successful leader induction program in California. Then, the paper provides an on the ground description of induction from the new leader's perspective. Finally, it will discuss implications for the field.

### **Statement of the Problem**

#### **Negative impacts of turnover.**

By nature, school leadership is a stressful and isolated profession that has high incidences of burnout (Whitaker, 1995; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Friedman, 1995). In the 2016-2017 school year, the national average tenure of a principal was 4 years; however, 35 percent of principals had worked at their current work site for 2 years and only 11 percent of principals served the same school for more than ten years (Levin & Bradley, 2019; Goldring & Taie, 2018).

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Research has shown that leader turnover has a negative effect on teacher turnover, and teacher turnover subsequently has a negative effect on student outcomes (Levin & Bradley, 2019; Learning Policy Institute, 2017; Burkhauser, 2017). In their recent Rand Corporation study, Burkhauser's team of researchers note,

While some argue that it is a good idea for districts to act quickly and replace principals who do not do well, principal turnover can have negative effects on students and teachers. Our research reveals that the replacement principals often fare no better than those who were removed. Overall, schools that lose a new principal after one year do not perform well in the subsequent year under (another) new principal." (p. 47)

When staff at a school site is constantly turning over, community and staff relationships need to be continually rebuilt to develop relational trust (Guin, 2004). Furthermore, high minority, high poverty, low performing schools in the United States often experience the highest rates of leader turnover which ultimately impacts student learning (Goldring & Taie, 2018; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Hanushek et al., 2004; Burkhauser et al., 2012). These students are likely to be most in need of a consistent and supportive school experience (Boyd et al., 2009; Hanushek et al., 2004; Scalfidi et al., 2003).

When schools struggle to retain teachers and administrators, students suffer. Research has shown that high turnover in schools affects student achievement and also affects school culture, leading to more turnover (Goldring & Taie, 2018; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Further, chronic teacher and staff turnover can negatively affect professional development, class size, scheduling, curriculum planning, collegiality, and a variety of other factors, adding a significant degree of chaos and complexity to schoolwide operations and potentially diminishing student learning across classrooms and teachers (Guin, 2004).

### **The Importance of developing self-efficacy.**

Leader self-efficacy, a perceived judgment of one's ability to affect change, is an important

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area that can be positively impacted by effective induction programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, 2003; Bandura, 2000; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Self-efficacy can be developed in numerous ways including through high quality preparation and professional development and the attainment of graduate degrees as well as regular reflection practices (Levin & Bradley, 2019). It involves how internal thoughts and beliefs impact and inform leader behavior within the specific context. Bandura (2000) proposes three specific approaches for developing self-efficacy that are directly transferable to leader induction: (a) guided mastery, which includes instructive modeling, guided skill development, and then transfer; (b) cognitive mastery modeling in order for the novice leaders to learn effective problem solving and decision making skills; and (c) self-regulatory competencies such as reflection and personal goal setting. When coupled with regular reflection practices, these approaches can have a significant impact on early career leaders. LSP, an induction program that focuses on improving self-efficacy, incorporates these approaches into the design experience.

### **LSP Design and Research Base**

LSP is based on a continuous improvement philosophy that assumes individuals grow and shape their perspectives as they move into new and more challenging positions. Novice leaders develop through serious, reflective practice, which is a central focus of LSP. Through a set of structured opportunities and activities, including coaching support, LSP participants deepen their understanding and refine their skills as instructional leaders. Candidates participate for two academic years (four semesters), engaging in the following six major activities and experiences:

1. Monthly Seminars that include narrative inquiry, sharing problems of practice, and rigorous activities that build their knowledge and practice;
2. Individualized Site-Based Coaching;
3. Professional Development Activities;

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4. Differentiated and Personalized Learning;
5. Documentation of leadership growth and development; and
6. Formative and Summative Assessments.

The Leadership Support Program extends the work done by both PLI preparation programs, which builds a theoretical base for prospective administrators and helps novice leaders translate theory to practice (Stein & Gewirtzman, 2003). LSP uses the experience of new leaders to guide them to develop a theory of leadership action. In other words, their experiences are the “moving force” for developing and co-conceptualizing what it means to be an effective leader (Dewey, 1938). This “concrete existential experience” of the new leader is the driving force to address the twin foci of reflection and inquiry, two of the key elements for sustaining retention and improving self-efficacy (Friere, 1970).

Informal learning in the workplace is the hallmark of adult learning, but with the benefit of formal structures to support learning and reflection, this learning can be strengthened (Daley, 2000). Thus, LSP's program design is premised on the belief that learning is social and that co-constructing meaning in a professional cohort with peers enhances and quickens learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

The curriculum base of both preparation programs is also extended and deepened in LSP following the Bruner model of spiraling curriculum (Bruner, 1960). Using an experiential learning cycle that acknowledges the need to systematically reflect on experiences greatly increases the probability of learning and growth of expertise (Schön, 1983). LSP's curriculum is designed around the Leadership Connection Rubric, a research-based compendium of leadership skills and dispositions created by Berkeley PLI that is aligned with and encompasses the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSELs)- California's adopted version of the Inter State Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) leadership standards. The seven



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Leadership Connection Rubric elements are: Presence and Attitude, Identity and Relationships, Equity and Advocacy, Curriculum and Instruction, Organization and Systems, Change and Coherence, and Assessment and Accountability. The dual goals of reflection and inquiry guide the development of a structured set of academic and practical activities that foster problem-analysis and problem-solving, authentic investigation of complex issues, and motivation and inspiration that sustain new leaders in what is often their most challenging period of development (Schön, 1987).

In addition to LSP's cohort model of peer learning, every LSP student is supported by an individual coach for the duration of the two-year program (minimum 80 hours total). Coaches are experienced educators who have previously worked as site leaders in local schools. They are recruited, selected, and trained by Berkeley PLI to learn and develop their skills as coaches. Furthering the social construction of knowledge, skills and dispositions, LSP views the coach-new leader relationships as cognitive apprenticeships in which a less knowledgeable or less skilled learner learns from an expert (Lave, 1993). LSP is premised on the theory of nested learning communities (Resnick, 1991) and the belief that situated cognition and the way a new leader comes to know and then to act in his or her new role will be important for the development of habits of mind and heart—knowledge, skills and dispositions—that will stay with the new leader as he or she gains expertise (Lave, 1988).

LSP also individualizes the program to meet the needs of adult learners. Through the Individual Induction Plan (IIP), LSP participants have the opportunity to identify individual learning needs. In addition to coaching, LSP supports their personalized learning in multiple ways: (1) Seminars— through protocols like Storytelling and Consultancy, students identify, explore, and receive support on their individual leadership issue/dilemma; (2) Workshops— multiple times a year, LSP provides workshops around relevant leadership topics; and (3)

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Personalized Learning Module (PLM)— online self-study units with selected resources and activities designed to promote their growth in a specific leadership skill or disposition that students have the opportunity to select and complete. These professional development activities provide differentiated opportunities for candidate growth.

Assessment is a key instructional strategy that is interwoven throughout the induction experience. All assessments are designed so that LSP Candidates demonstrate evidence for meeting the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSELs) and Berkeley PLI's Leadership Connection Rubric. Initial Assessment occurs as part of the admission and enrollment process. Formative assessment is conducted by candidates, peers, and LSP staff on identified goals, through multiple opportunities and contexts and throughout the two years of the program. These opportunities for reflection and feedback may occur during seminars, during coaching, or through required assignments. At the end of the first year of the program, candidates are formally assessed against the standards in the Leadership Connection Rubric through a benchmark assessment. Measures include documentation collected through the IIP and Assessments from LSP Staff. This process allows the Candidate to identify strengths and challenges and to set goals for Year 2. Finally, to determine Candidate's completion of the licensure program and eligibility for the Professional Clear Credential, at the end of program, LSP staff gathers all evidence of Candidate progress for a summative assessment which will include the Portfolio, the Portfolio presentation, the Instructional Change Project, the Time Use Change Project, and the Reflective Journal.

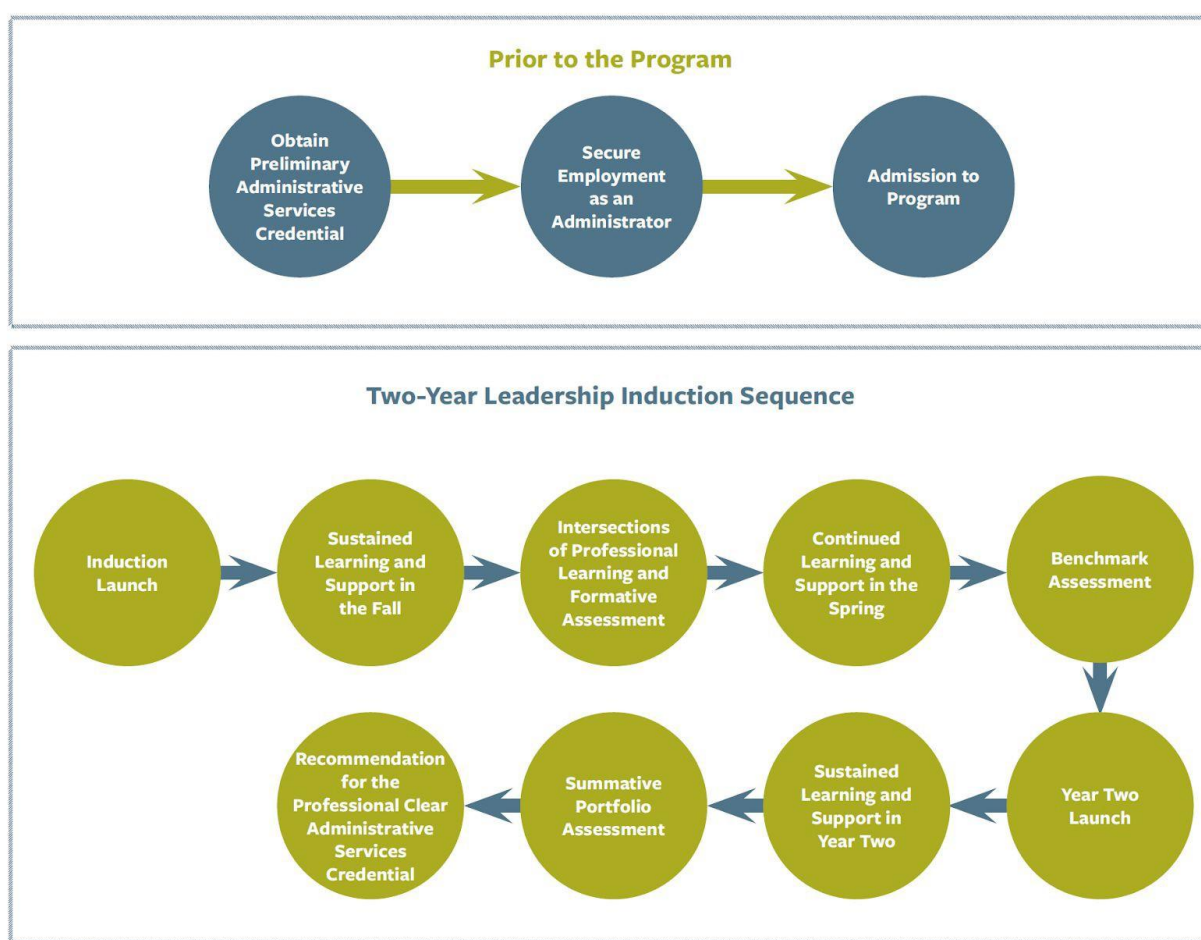
### **Description of the Candidate experience**

This section describes the components of a typical journey through the Leadership Support Program from an on the ground level perspective. It is meant to serve as a complement to the program description and theoretical underpinnings described in the previous section. The figure

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below provides a graphical representation of the journey for early career leaders. Each milestone is described in the text that follows using the example of Ms. Lee, a new administrator who is entering LSP. By including the perspective and typical experience of the early career leader, we intend to illuminate how the different types of support and structures are interwoven to create a fluid and cohesive induction experience.

### Overview of the Two-Year Leadership Induction Sequence



### Induction launch

Within the first four months of being hired as an assistant principal, the early career leader, Ms. Lee, has been admitted to Leadership Support Program, UC Berkeley's two-year

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induction program. In the early fall, she is required to attend a day long Saturday retreat with all of the other LSP 1 leaders. Led by Mr. Jones, the Program Coordinator, the retreat provides an overview of the year, opportunities for relationship building, an introduction to the monthly meeting protocols, and the launch of the initial assessment. Guided by the Leadership Connection Rubric, Ms. Lee's initial assessment focuses on Elements 1-3: Presence and Attitude, Identity and Relationships, and Equity and Advocacy, as they are the foundational leadership aspects, and includes a self-assessment, as well as other inputs such as her preliminary program portfolio and employer goals. Ms. Lee leaves the retreat with homework including the completion of the initial assessment and identification of 5-6 learning goals for the first year. From the retreat, Ms. Lee knows that half of her learning goals will be supported by her leadership coach, while the remaining goals will be supported through the program's professional learning options or Ms. Lee's employer.

Less than a month after the retreat, Ms. Lee is introduced to her leadership coach by the Program Coordinator, Mr. Jones, who has matched a coach for Ms. Lee based on various criteria, such as, district, school level, specialization, school type, gender, and race. Ms. Lee and her induction program coach, Mr. Diaz, make an appointment for an initial meeting to take place at her school site.

Mr. Diaz arrives for their initial coaching meeting the next week. Ms. Lee invites him into her office and they review the agenda Mr. Diaz has drafted and begin by spending some time getting to know each other. Ms. Lee takes Mr. Diaz on a tour of the campus, describing some of her early observations and challenges. Later, Ms. Lee shares her self-assessment results that she started working on at the retreat. They identify the 2-3 goals set in her Individual Induction Plan (IIP) that will be supported by her coach. Mr. Diaz asks probing questions about her goals and

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what support she needs. They agree that Ms. Lee will take responsibility to schedule a three-way meeting where Mr. Diaz can introduce the induction program and its expectations to Ms. Lee's supervisor and the supervisor will have the opportunity to provide input to the IIP. Within a few days, Ms. Lee receives a follow up email from Mr. Diaz summarizing their meeting, agreed upon next steps, as well as his availability for the three-way meeting.

About one month after the retreat, Ms. Lee attends her first required monthly meeting. Her facilitator, Ms. Ali, is a veteran school administrator in a neighboring district. Ms. Lee's group is composed of 8-10 other first year administrators who also attended the opening retreat where they initially met Ms. Ali. At the beginning of the first meeting, Ms. Ali describes her excitement about working together for the next two years and explains that these professional learning sessions will be a supportive environment throughout the program. She further describes that each meeting will be divided into several parts: supporting problems of practice, providing content as well as applications, and making other program connections. At the beginning of the problems of practice section of the agenda, Ms. Lee is assigned to a trio with two other participants and they are asked to use the storytelling protocol introduced at the retreat. The trio reviews the protocol: Each person is given 5 minutes to describe a specific leadership dilemma, then the two partners have a chance to ask questions, make observations, and identify implications for leadership.

### **Sustained learning and support in the fall**

Ms. Lee continues to attend monthly meetings and engages in multiple coaching sessions at her site (approximately 3 hours per month). She completes short reading assignments about supervision and evaluation for her monthly meetings, engages in several email conversation chains with her coach between sessions, and connects with a fellow participant to learn more about how his school's special education inclusion model works.

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At the November monthly meeting, Ms. Ali reminds everyone that there will be no monthly meeting in December. Instead, participants have the opportunity to select other professional learning options. Ms. Ali describes the options, which were first introduced at the retreat, to the candidates. Candidates may choose to participate in workshops, complete Personalized Learning Modules, or conduct a focused school visit. Ms. Lee decides to consult with Mr. Diaz about her options. One workshop offering is focused on the legal procedures for an expulsion hearing. Ms. Lee thinks that she could benefit from this workshop because she is in charge of student discipline at her school; however, it is not a focus of her IIP goals. She is also interested in visiting a fellow participant from the program because his school has a special education inclusion model and Ms. Lee is responsible for supervising the special education department at her school. Finally, the Personalized Learning Module about the Equity Framework also seems important and could be completed on her own schedule. Mr. Diaz encourages Ms. Lee to use the goals that she set in her IIP as a guide, but to also take her context into consideration. She decides to attend both the legal procedures for expulsion workshop and complete the Personalized Learning Module on the Equity Framework.

### **Intersections of professional learning and formative assessment**

The workshop on legal procedures for expulsion hearings is held in the evening at a local middle school and facilitated by an attorney who specializes in education law. Ms. Lee is happy to see a few people from her monthly group as well as others she met at the retreat. The two-hour workshop centers on a case study. The participants use the case study to surface questions about the legal proceedings. They have time for small group and large group discussions and questions. After the workshop, Ms. Lee submits a reflective paper to her portfolio about what she learned, both in terms of content and leadership development, to Mr. Jones and

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Ms. Ali.

To begin her work on the Personalized Learning Module (PLM) about the Equity Framework, Ms. Lee goes to the program's website where she views a two-minute video introduction (made by Mr. Jones) as well as resources and suggested activities. Based on the overview, she creates a plan for how she wants to complete the PLM. As part of the PLM which includes self-paced readings and online resources, Ms. Lee shares some of her learning reflections with Mr. Diaz in her coaching session. Next, she writes a paper documenting the process by which she completed the Personalized Learning Module, ideas that surfaced from her conversation with Mr. Diaz, and next steps and implications for her leadership practice. Finally, Ms. Lee uploads the paper to her online portfolio for review by Mr. Jones and Ms. Ali.

### **Continued learning and support in the spring**

After the more individualized professional learning options in December, the monthly meetings continue to focus on problems of practice as well as supervision and evaluation of staff. Ms. Lee decides to leverage this topic by focusing on how to support a struggling teacher she is assigned to evaluate. Ms. Lee has a chance to analyze and compare selected evaluation instruments, practice having hard conversations, and rate staff performance according to the district rubric. In the spring, she writes a paper on how she has grown in her leadership stances related to supervision and evaluation of employees and submits it via her portfolio for review by Mr. Jones and Ms. Ali.

Through her ongoing coaching sessions, Mr. Diaz supports Ms. Lee by discussing leadership dilemmas, helping her plan professional development for teachers, co-observing a set of teachers that Ms. Lee is assigned to evaluate, and observing Ms. Lee's presentation at a parent and community meeting for the purposes of providing feedback about her professional presence,

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one of her IIP goals. Together, they regularly revisit the three goals Ms. Lee set in her IIP and identify areas of growth. One goal was adjusted after the first semester due to a change in the district's student discipline policy. With their coaching conversations, they have developed a trusting, confidential relationship over time.

In the spring, Ms. Lee also has a second opportunity to choose a workshop, Personalized Learning Module, or another professional learning offering. Again, several options look appealing. She reviews her IIP and decides to complete the school visit to her fellow candidate's school to learn more about his school's special education inclusion program, an activity she was unable to schedule during the fall. As the administrator in charge of the Special Education department, she is leading a team that is in the process of creating a vision for an integrated program at her school. Ms. Lee decides to support her work responsibilities by identifying this topic as the focus for her instructional change project, one of the central inquiry activities Ms. Lee will complete in the second year of the program.

### **Benchmark assessment**

The end of the first year, the halfway mark of the induction program, includes a series of summary activities culminating in the Benchmark Assessment. From the retreat, Ms. Lee understands that the Benchmark Assessment is an important checkpoint in her induction program. Ms. Lee exchanges impressions about her progress on her IIP goals with her coach. By compiling and analyzing all of their meeting notes and monthly summaries, Mr. Diaz presents Ms. Lee with a report that includes a description of their coaching work as well as the evidence he has collected from his field notes about her progress on three of the goals from her IIP. Ms. Lee submits this document to her portfolio for the Benchmark Assessment. At the last monthly meeting of the school year, Ms. Lee prepares a reflection document about her leadership development which she



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shares with her trio. This document is also submitted to her online portfolio for the Benchmark Assessment.

During the summer, Mr. Jones reviews the various components of Ms. Lee's Benchmark Assessment: coach report, reflection document, as well as professional learning assignments. He determines that she has made sufficient progress to continue into the second year of the induction program without stipulations or additional recommended activities.

### **Year two launch**

On a Saturday in August, Ms. Lee attends the Year Two retreat. She is excited to re-connect with the participants in her monthly group as well as others in the larger group. Led by Mr. Jones, the Coordinator, the retreat provides an overview of the second year, opportunities for relationship building, an introduction to a new monthly meeting protocol, and the continuance of the IIP. Again, guided by the Leadership Rubric, Ms. Lee's IIP now focuses on Elements 4-7: Curriculum and Instruction, Organization and Systems, Change and Coherence, and Assessment and Accountability, including a self-assessment, as well as other inputs such as feedback on her Benchmark Assessment, her performance evaluation from her supervisor at work, and employer goals. Mr. Jones also guides the students to set their goal for the Instructional Change Project. Ms. Lee leaves the retreat with homework that includes completing the self-assessment and identifying 5-6 learning goals for the second year. From the retreat, Ms. Lee knows that half of her learning goals are to be supported by her leadership coach, while the remaining goals will be supported through the program's professional learning options or Ms. Lee's employer. Ms. Lee will also complete crafting her goal of her Instructional Change Project, with the support of her Coach.

Mr. Diaz continues as Ms. Lee's leadership coach. Building upon the trusting relationship

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established in Year One, they jump in to identifying the goals in the IIP that will be supported by coaching for Year Two. Ms. Lee wants Mr. Diaz to support her instructional change project-collaboratively creating a vision for an integrated special education model. Mr. Diaz will support Ms. Lee by helping her to identify the organization and systems that may be affected by the new model as well as predicting how other curriculum and instruction decisions may be impacted. Through this process, she is better able to analyze both the challenges and possible solutions for making the change. They agree that Ms. Lee will coordinate the three-way meeting between herself, Mr. Diaz, and her supervisor so that Mr. Diaz has the opportunity to review the program requirements and her supervisor can give input into the second year goals of her IIP.

About one month after the retreat, Ms. Lee attends her first required monthly Seminar of the second year. Ms. Ali is excited about building upon the work of the first year, specifically shifting from trios to whole group work. Ms. Lee volunteers to be the first person to offer a problem of practice for the new consultancy protocol. She greatly benefits from preparing to present her problem with Ms. Ali and especially learned from hearing the questions and suggestions of the other participants in her group.

### **Sustained learning and support in year two**

Similar to Year One, Ms. Lee continues to attend monthly meetings and engages in coaching sessions at her site (approximately 3 hours per month). She has two more opportunities to engage in workshops, Professional Learning Modules, or other professional learning like the site visit she chose last year. Ms. Ali, Mr. Diaz, and Mr. Jones all continue supporting Ms. Lee throughout the year. She continues to use her online Individual Induction Plan (IIP) to collect her reflection papers, analysis, and other artifacts that provide supporting evidence of her leadership development.

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In Year Two, Ms. Lee's employer invites her to participate in a leadership institute for aspiring principals. Through that program, she attends workshops from various experts as well as district office leaders. She is able to leverage her participation in this institute for her induction program by documenting her professional learning in her IIP.

Ms. Lee begins to realize that she really wants to continue professional relationships with some of the peers in her monthly meeting group beyond the induction program. She networks more strategically. For example, Ms. Lee consults with her peers for recommended Personalized Learning Modules and a small group begins to meet for dinner before their monthly meetings. She more frequently contacts individual peers for resources or other contacts for both the program and in her work.

### **Summative portfolio assessment**

The end of the second year includes a series of summary activities culminating in the Summative Assessment. From the retreat, Ms. Lee understands that the recommendation for the Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential (full licensure) is based on the Summative Assessment. In preparation, Ms. Lee exchanges impressions about the progress she has made on her IIP goals with her coach. By compiling and analyzing all of their meeting notes and monthly summaries, Mr. Diaz presents Ms. Lee with a report that includes a description of their coaching work as well as the evidence he has collected from his field notes about her progress on three of the goals from her IIP. Ms. Lee prepares and presents her final portfolio to Mr. Jones, Mr. Diaz, and a group of her peers. Her 20-minute presentation highlights her most significant leadership growth for each element of the Leadership Connection Rubric during the last two years. The audience provides feedback about Ms. Lee's growth and readiness to lead in the future.

During the summer, Mr. Jones reviews the various components of Ms. Lee's Summative

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Assessment: coach report, portfolio, as well as professional learning assignments. This evidence informs his recommendation for the Professional Clear Administrative Service Credential. With her full licensure requirements complete, Ms. Lee has completed the early career phase of her leadership and can begin pursuit of other professional development opportunities that will continue to build her knowledge and skills for future leadership challenges and dilemmas. Due to their deep bond working together over two years, Ms. Lee continues to call Mr. Diaz periodically to inform him of her accomplishments and work. Furthermore, she continues to meet monthly for dinner with her peers from her monthly group.

### **Impact of Leader Induction on Early Career Retention and Self-Efficacy**

As a part of our methodology, we analyzed participant surveys, artifacts, and coach descriptions collected between 2014 and 2018. Because LSP's model is designed to engage participants in self-assessment, the growth areas they select can be a first indicator of their perceived needs. Furthermore, because the goals are used as focal points for developing competencies, professional learning, and coaching plans, we were able to analyze these processes to illustrate progress or competency development.

To study the impact of LSP's curriculum on the areas of retention and self-efficacy specifically, we analyzed the frequency with which each descriptor of practice in the Leadership Connection Rubric was self-identified by LSP participants. In the past 4 years, the two most frequently selected indicators were Resiliency (1.1.3) and Courageous Conversations (4.1.2). In fact, these indicators were selected almost twice as frequently as the other indicators.<sup>2</sup> Even more specifically, participants chose resiliency as a growth area more often in the first year of induction

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<sup>2</sup> 36% of participants (57/158) selected 1.1.3: Resiliency as a growth area indicator during LSP1, well above the 16% average selection rate of LSP1 indicators. 31% of participants (39/125) selected 4.1.2: Courageous Conversations as a growth area indicator during LSP2, also above the 18% average selection rate for LSP2 indicators.

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and courageous conversations more frequently in the second year. Understanding how leaders define these growth areas, how they address their self-identified challenges, and how LSP supports their efforts can illuminate future investigations for the field as they are connected to the research on retention and self-efficacy. In fact, this level of analysis allows programs and researchers to extend beyond program satisfaction to examine impact on intended outcomes.

### **Retention**

LSP boasts a high completion rate and retention rate among its graduates. In the past eight years of LSP, 98% (252 of 258) of participants of both pathways have completed the two-year program. And, further comparison of graduates reveals consistency in retention across pathways. Of those who completed LSP between 2012 and 2015, 84% of those who completed the in person pathway (San Francisco Bay Area) currently work in education, 98% in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. And, graduates of the hybrid pathway (Los Angeles Basin) boast a similarly high retention rate: 84% currently work in education, 100% of whom work in the greater Los Angeles Area.

By design, LSP intentionally develops a community of practice for early career leaders- a period of time in which they are even more prone to low job satisfaction and isolation. From the monthly seminars to coaching activities, there is a sense of solidarity and support for participants. For example, one participant wrote, "My coach was my personal cheerleader, encouraging me when I needed to be seen, and guiding me through challenges. She saw my strengths and helped me see them time and time again. She gave me the space I needed and wanted to reflect and dig deep." Another wrote, "it is great to be [in seminar] with like-minded leaders." In other words, engaging in the induction activities automatically diminished some of the isolation of the profession, a leading cause of burnout.

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For participants, resiliency was the most frequently self-selected growth area in their first year of LSP. Through their artifacts, participants' understanding of the issues related to resilience shifted over time. Initially, they often conceptualized resiliency in quantifiable terms such as the number of hours spent working versus attending to non-work related needs. By creating "self-care" plans, often involving commitments to leave the workplace by a certain time or limiting the amount of work they take home, leaders attempted to mitigate the fatigue which comes alongside their positions. In their artifacts, many of them documented how their plans for work life balance were difficult to achieve in isolation. When they turned to their leadership coaches for support, participants reported greater success. As one participant noted,

*I am so very thankful for my coach who supported me in understanding the issues that I was dealing with clearly without getting bogged down in things that were out of my control. I also appreciate her deep understanding of my own need for resilience now and in the future, and for the tools she was able to support me with.*

Additionally, LSP participants found that the network they developed with other leaders helped them cope with challenges and exhaustion. LSP helps early career leaders to shift from technical solutions such as the implementation of self-care plans (which are prone to be derailed by the demands of leadership) into more systemic solutions such as building networks and relying upon trusted colleagues to help leaders process and diffuse the stress and challenges they encounter.

For some participants, conceptions of resilience took the form of commitment towards social justice goals, particularly around racial equity. They describe that advocating for equity, often in situations where changing practices have been met with resistance by other administrators, faculty and community members, was emotionally draining especially when there was limited impact. Similar to concerns over work life balance, many leaders initially approached this challenge as an individual endeavor, such as one participant who recalled that "I began to feel isolated and somewhat defeated in my equity minded work within education because in our

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politically correct society and my conservative district, I was not working with people or leaders who were willing to talk about equity outside of the surface level of achievement gap data.”

However, through the support of coaching and thought partnering with other like-minded leaders, participants demonstrated new ways to develop collaborative and comprehensive strategies to center social justice. For example, one participant (with the support of others) was able to identify vulnerability as central to preventing change at her school site and that “after my first couple of seminars and storytelling protocol, I became immersed in genuine practice, thought, analysis and planning that’s rooted in equity and cultural awareness. I am at a place of equity and advocacy that is collective and demonstrates personal and professional self-awareness that is culturally rich and diverse.” Indeed, there appears to be a connection between increased resilience and retention—an explicit focus of LSP’s induction model.

### **Self-Efficacy**

When leaders feel adequately supported and prepared for their work, they are likely to be more optimistic about their ability to affect change and more confident in their leadership. One of the ways that LSP measures self-efficacy is by surveying its participants on a regular basis. Between 2014 and 2017, 79% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the topics and activities/projects of the induction program seminars expanded their personal repertoire of leadership strategies. In the same time period, 83% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that LSP’s seminars/discussions pushed their thinking. One respondent described it this way, “I loved our monthly seminars! There was just the right balance of discussion and content. I learned a lot from hearing others’ stories. I also received really great suggestions and feedback when I shared my own.”

Associated with self-efficacy is the growth area indicator around “courageous

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conversations,” a necessary skill of addressing hard, controversial, or emotionally charged topics in a constructive manner to enact equity centered change (Singleton & Linton, 2007; Abrams, 2009). Participants in their second year of LSP selected “courageous conversations” more frequently than all other indicators. Specifically, participants identified examples such as holding difficult conversations with faculty around work performance or evaluations. They noted how issues of racial equity created even greater levels of complexities. Other factors described included feeling like an outsider to the school culture as well as the challenge of creating authentic, caring relationships with a large number of staff. For example, one leader recalled how she was “new to this staff and the school culture is deeply entrenched here as they have very little staff turnover and are able to overlook many equity issues due to high test scores and academic achievement” and went on to note how she “was trying to establish relationships with people and figure out my own role and identity in this large organization.” The supports and structures provided in LSP allowed participants to focus on building their capacity around "courageous conversations" resulting in a greater sense of self-efficacy and increased ability to envision more pathways towards addressing equity issues at their school sites.

Leaders found that relying upon LSP’s coaching model was an effective way to greatly improve self-efficacy. For example, 94% of candidates agreed (4 of 5) and strongly agreed (5 of 5) that coaching was instrumental for their development. 93% of respondents indicated that with coach support, they were able to establish clear goals that supported their learning and/or job performance. As one respondent wrote, “Coaching has allowed me to reflect on my job and most especially the things that are working. Coaching has ingrained in me the learning stance and also thinking of how to be a part of the solution.” Leaders indicate that coaching helps them to focus on relationship building as critical before engaging in conversations which may be perceived as difficult or challenging the status quo. One leader recalled how slowing down the relationship



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building process “forces me to stop and focus on that one person, to pay attention to them” and that by doing so he was “also trying to make that person feel like someone cares about them, in order to make them more resilient in the face of a stressful job. I have also been able to learn more about what is going on around school and with our students this way.” Drawing upon the coaching models utilized in LSP, leaders who reproduced those conversations at their school sites found success in creating cooperative and trusting relationships before engaging in difficult conversations around performance, behavior and school climate.

When surveyed, the coaches in LSP echoed these sentiments of the leaders they worked with, particularly around anxiety which accompanies conversations around teacher performance. For example, one coach noted that the leaders “expressed this dilemma in balancing their stance with the reality of the risks that they may face in terms of negative consequences for them personally or for the constituents they represent.” In supporting leaders, coaches use a variety of techniques which are suited to the specifics of the particular situation. Consistent in their approach has been both to ask probing questions in order to help leaders to interrogate assumptions and clarify objectives and develop a clear plan before they proceed with a difficult conversation. Role playing was also often used to build “confidence and fluidity.” One coach reflected that determining “the difference between facts, perceptions, assumptions and interpretations and how all of those impact the situation” was helpful to coaches, and “essential to the discussion was the focus on incremental small steps that could be taken to reach the ultimate goal as well as identifying allies in the mission.” From these and other data, it is evident that LSP meets the goal of supporting the development of self-efficacy through key strategies including coaching and effective professional learning opportunities.

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### **Conclusion and Implications**

The purpose of this paper is to present a case of leader induction in California that has successfully supported over 300 early career leaders and served as a model for new policies in the state. Policy makers, researchers, practitioners, and educators at large can use the description of the design and induction experience to inform decisions about how to support new and aspiring school leaders in their context. Now that induction is mandated in California, there is an opportunity to conduct wider scale studies on the impact of leader induction on critical areas. In fact, the results detailed in this report indicate that it is possible for a rigorous induction program such as LSP to reduce leader attrition and improve leader competence by having a substantial and positive impact on critical levers of school improvement such as retention and self-efficacy.

Next steps for the field include deeper and more systematic study of the impact of leader induction programs as well as the development of more models of induction. Questions to consider include:

- How do different types of leaders benefit from induction?
- What are the most effective models for the induction of leaders for high need schools?
- What are the elements of effective leadership coaching provided by induction programs?
- What is the long-term impact of a successful induction program like LSP?
- How do mid-career principals continue to use some of the learnings from their induction program in their day to day practice?

Ultimately, the support leaders receive in their early career may have lasting impacts on their long term career trajectories. Deeper investigations that identify the attributes of effective induction models and exactly how induction affects leadership development are needed. Moreover, discerning the specific needs of leaders who work with vulnerable and historically underserved youth is critical for sustaining equitable change in the future. Indeed, attending to the needs of the hardest to staff schools is an important part of designing and researching effective leader induction programs.

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