



*CALIFORNIA
CHARTER
AUTHORIZING
PROFESSIONALS*

The California Charter Authorizing
Professionals Action Plan to
Strengthen Authorizing Practices
to Support English Learners

September 2019

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The [California Charter Authorizing Professionals](#) (CCAP) is a collaborative association for charter authorizing professionals to come together and support one another in their work. Since 2014, members of CCAP have advanced quality public education for all students by providing charter school authorizing professionals with the support, resources, and collective voice necessary to foster high-performing, fiscally sound, autonomous, and accountable charter schools.

In the fall of 2018, CCAP began a partnership with the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers (CACSA), and Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers (FACSA) to create the Tri-State Alliance for Improving District-Led Charter Authorizing with support from a three-year \$2.7 million [National Dissemination Grant](#) from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation. The Tri-State Alliance’s four goals are to:

1. Strengthen authorizing in states with predominantly district authorizers.
2. Educate districts and other key stakeholders about districts’ ongoing authorizing and oversight responsibilities under state law as an effective way to expand options for all students, thereby improving access and services for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English Learners (ELs).
3. Engage and provide support to a larger proportion of district authorizers in California, Colorado, and Florida, including small and rural districts and districts that authorize a significant number of charter schools experiencing significant low performance or non-compliance with academic financial, governance, or operational requirements.
4. Support states outside the Tri-State Alliance that seek to establish statewide associations for charter authorizers.¹

Because of the overall English learner enrollment disparity between California’s charter schools (16 percent of charter school K-12 students are ELs) and other public schools (21 percent), CCAP will focus its work under goal two of the Tri-State Alliance project on understanding where and why California’s charters serve a smaller proportion of ELs, as well as taking actions to support authorizers to help charter schools meet the needs of ELs.

CCAP’s Action Plan to Help California Authorizers Support ELs

This action plan follows the recommendations from “An Assessment of the Needs of California Charter Authorizers to Support English Learners” that CCAP conducted in June and July 2019, in partnership with [Education First](#). (See the separate needs assessment report for details about authorizer needs and opportunities related to supporting ELs.) Below are the highest-priority activities CCAP will implement within three core recommendations over the remainder of the Tri-State Alliance project and beyond:

1. Serving as a hub for authorizing policies, best practices, professional development, research, and tools to support English learners

¹ [Tri-State Alliance for Improving District-Led Charter Authorizing](#) (2018)

2. Communicating clear legal requirements and disseminating new tools and resources (described in #1) related to English learners to authorizers
3. Sharing stories and building a network for authorizers serving English learners equipped with evidence-based best practices and tools

At all times, CCAP is dedicated to partnering with its members, other California authorizers, and additional experts to translate law and policy into practice, co-developing new tools for authorizers where they are needed, and curating and sharing the excellent resources that authorizers are already using in the field.

This action plan specifies activities to support authorizers’ practices related to English learners. CCAP recognizes that for some of the included activities, it will not focus solely on ELs, so it will be important to identify where these activities apply to other areas of CCAP’s work more broadly. By implementing this action plan, CCAP will curate and share best practices and resources and convenes authorizers and others in the field to learn together, create meaningful connections, and collectively problem-solve challenges related to supporting ELs.

For each of the three recommendations, the first table briefly describes CCAP’s current actions, a summary of what authorizers need and want based on the needs assessment, and the results of the adoption of the recommendation. The second table for each recommendation provides more details about the actions CCAP will take to fulfill the recommendation.




Recommendation 1:
Serving as a hub for authorizing policies, best practices, professional development, research, and tools to support English learners

| | |
|--|---|
| What is CCAP doing now? | CCAP is currently completing a full upgrade to its website. The existing website currently includes a small number of resources for members and other users. These resources are the “Proposed Guidance for Effective Charter School Authorizing in California: Values, Principles and Expectations,” by CARSNet, with support from CCAP and NACSA, and a set of materials from the CCBE March 2019 workshop. A significantly larger number of resources will be uploaded on an ongoing basis on the new website. CCAP is currently compiling and curating additional information about authorizing best practices, professional development, and research. |
| What do authorizers need and want? | Most staff charged with authorizing activities in districts and county offices are not experts on ELs. Many authorizers do not have access to a best-in-class district/county EL team outside of the authorizing office. When asked to rank the most helpful kinds of assistance, authorizer survey respondents’ top four recommendations were for additions to the online resource hub: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An online archive of best practice procedures, materials, templates, and forms 2. An online community where authorizers can post questions and share information/ideas with peers 3. Webinars and other remote training opportunities 4. Training and “bootcamps” for new district staff after they are assigned to charter school oversight |
| If adopted, what would this change look like? | CCAP is committed to becoming the go-to organization for authorizing policies, best practices, professional development, research, and tools to support ELs. Its redesigned website will be the primary venue by which CCAP and its members interact and share research and tools, and |

connect with peers. Beyond its online presence, CCAP will be more visible at conferences and other events authorizers and charter school leaders attend.







The key below provides information about the level of effort and resources required to implement each activity. The activities that appear above the dotted line are recommended to be completed before those below the dotted line—based on logical sequencing and input from the CCAP board. CCAP will further prioritize the activities as it develops its implementation plan for the recommendations.

Key

Level of Effort (for CCAP) = Low  to Medium  to High  , reflecting Education First’s assessment of how complex or complicated the work will be for CCAP to implement

Resources Required = \$ (nominal fiscal impact/staff time) to \$\$\$ (substantial fiscal impact)

Activities:







| INITIAL EXECUTION | MONTHLY | QUARTERLY |
|---|---|--|
| Create the Hub  \$ | Update & Refine  \$ | Continue to Curate  \$ |
| <p>Create list of highest priority EL-related model policies, tools, professional development materials, and research, such as: Explicit model checklists for EL services, including legal requirements, for both petition review and annual oversight; and tools, practices, and policies from experienced authorizers on lottery and admission procedures and student discipline</p> | <p>Regularly review and update member portal content to ensure the most relevant and timely materials are easy to find, and that outdated content is either updated or removed; determine which resources are available for members only and which are available for all users</p> | <p>Schedule 1:1 calls and/or focus groups with members to identify the EL-related resources that they are using and that are most helpful; collect and curate those resources and create templates from applicable ones to include on website</p> |
| AS NEEDED | | |
| Shared Learning  \$\$ | Network  \$ | Interact  \$\$ |
| <p>Design and host webinars on specific professional development needs for authorizers—can be designed and presented in partnership with EL experts and exemplar authorizers; record and link webinars to website for users to access later</p> | <p>Identify and recommend external learning opportunities for members in partnership with national organizations (e.g., NACSA)—these could also include attending (either in person or virtually) training sessions or conferences hosted by other local, state, or national organizations</p> | <p>Research and create an interactive online community function on the CCAP website that encourages authorizers and other users to post questions and solutions and connect with peers or other experts</p> |






Recommendation 2:

Communicating clear legal requirements and disseminating new tools and resources (described in #1) related to English learners to authorizers

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|--|---|
| What is CCAP doing now? | It appears that no organizations actively track and communicate changes to state or local laws and policies related to ELs. CCAP expects to fulfill this role in the future. CCAP’s primary methods of disseminating resources has been through its website and CCAP members presenting at workshops and conferences that authorizers attend. |
| What do authorizers need and want? | There are frequent changes in state and local laws and policies affecting authorizers and charter schools. Authorizers need an organization, like CCAP, to track those changes and communicate them quickly, clearly, and in a way that emphasizes what it means for authorizers and/or the charter schools they authorize. Authorizers also need resources, research, and tools—such as those described in recommendation #1—that are pushed out to them regularly and opportunities to learn how to use them effectively. |
| If adopted, what would this change look like? | CCAP shifts to a more proactive approach of communicating with its members, other authorizers, and other users, and invites users to become part of an informal network where they can access up-to-date legal and policy guidance, high-quality resources, and connections to peers. |

Activities:

| INITIAL EXECUTION | MONTHLY | QUARTERLY |
|---|---|--|
| Develop a Plan   | Touch-Points   | Live Interactions   |
| Create an annual communications plan and calendar aligned to CCAP’s overall strategy for supporting authorizers related to ELs that will identify key goals, milestones and communications opportunities for the year, monitor progress against these goals, and share a public version of CCAP’s calendar on the website and via regular newsletters | Send a monthly email newsletter to members and other authorizers with content updates and a spotlight on one or more authorizers and their work related to ELs; the content can be in a format for users to seamlessly share on social media (e.g., website links, talking points and videos); encourage members to share how they used the content over email and on future member webinars calls | Schedule quarterly webinars with CCAP members to (a) update members on CCAP activities and (b) discuss local successes and challenges; consider using some of the time together to discuss authorizer’s “problems of practice”; post the webinars on the annual calendar so authorizers can sign up in advance and plan ahead |







| ANNUALLY | | |
|---|--|--|
| Database   | Content Calendar   | Learning Agenda   |
| Create and annually update a master list of all California authorizers and main point(s) of contact for each | Co-develop with members an annual content calendar , which consists of 3-4 content areas related to ELs that members would like to focus on with CCAP (and other experts) for the year | Develop an internal learning agenda for staff and board members that highlights 3-4 new skills, content areas, or communications approaches the team agrees to prioritize, including how to pursue this learning agenda |

Recommendation 3:

Sharing stories and building a network for authorizers serving English learners equipped with evidence-based best practices and tools

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| What is CCAP doing now? | CCAP currently collects some anecdotal information through its board members and opportunistic 1:1 interactions with other members. CCAP also connects members to one another, but this is also opportunistic and relies on word of mouth. |
| What do authorizers need and want? | Authorizers find value in comparing their approach supporting ELs with their authorizing practices and how their peers are handling similar issues in other districts and counties. In addition to the research-based tools and guidance, they want high-quality recent stories and examples from their peers. For example, how authorizers with a similar charter school portfolio or in a similar context (e.g., small or large, urban or rural) overcame a certain challenge or innovated in an effective way. |
| If adopted, what would this change look like? | CCAP creates a schedule for how and when to collect stories, testimonials, and exemplars from members through surveys, 1:1 discussions, and anecdotal evidence discussed during webinars. As part of this schedule, CCAP could conduct an annual analysis of collected content to inform future resource development. More opportunities for authorizers to come together, either virtually or in person, will also enable them to share lessons and collaborate more proactively to address shared challenges with their authorizing practices. |

Activities:

| INITIAL EXECUTION | | ANNUALLY | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Sharing Stories  \$ | Assess Needs  \$\$ | Celebrations  \$ | |
| Create a calendar and workplan for eliciting authorizer success stories related to ELs (can be within communications plan); provide templates for authorizers to submit and share their success stories (e.g., blog posts, short video testimonies, captioned artifacts); secure authorizers to volunteer to share their stories | Conduct an annual analysis of all content collected and curated and survey users to identify the types of resources and the specific resources that are most helpful to inform future content creation and curation | Create an annual authorizer award to honor and celebrate the good work of authorizers; develop a plan for the nomination, review, and award process; potentially crowd source names for the award in honor of a charter school sector leader, student, or other significant person | |
| ONGOING | | | |
| User Profiles  \$ | Gatherings  \$\$ | Peer Connections  \$ | |
| Include a space on the CCAP website for members to create and share their profiles , which includes contact information and details that will help facilitate connections and collaboration (e.g., priorities for the year, areas of expertise, schools) | Host receptions at conferences and other events authorizers attend throughout the year to share CCAP’s curated resources and facilitate networking across authorizers | Facilitate the connection of peers to each other for 1:1 resource sharing, idea generation, feedback, and/or problem-solving | |

Next Steps

CCAP will develop an implementation plan that details the milestones, steps, and owners of the activities in this action plan to support English learners. It will work to balance the implementation plan with priority actions that will make progress toward all four goals of the Tri-State Alliance project. Once developed, CCAP will implement the plan, regularly assess against it, and adapt it as needed.

Areas for Further Study

CCAP acknowledges that authorizers have additional needs related to ELs and recognizes that the changing state and local political and policy landscape may exert its influence. As CCAP develops its implementation plan for actions that will strengthen authorizing practices, the following are issues to consider exploring further:

- Regularly monitor potential and actual changes to state law and regulations that affect authorizers and charter schools (part of recommendation #2). This includes monitoring the political landscape affecting charter schools and charter school authorizing (e.g., elected officials and other policymakers' public statements, closures, polling, etc.)
- Assess the outcomes from the current and future legislative cycles to understand and communicate how new policies affect authorizers and charter schools
- Partner with members to conduct local needs assessments and understand local policies, stakeholders and decision-makers related to ELs and other student populations to better understand enrollment data and possible disparities
- Engage researchers and practitioners to understand early childhood pipelines into charter schools for dual language learners (in early childhood education) and ELs (in K-12 education) and their impact on enrollment
- Engage researchers and practitioners to understand pipelines (via institutions of higher education and alternative certification) for teachers who teach English learners

This action plan document describes the activities CCAP, in partnership with its members, will pursue to fulfill each recommendation. With the implementation of these recommendations, CCAP will strengthen its role as a hub for authorizing policies, best practices, professional development, research, and tools that support English learners.

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