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Administrative Decision-making in a Time of Resource Decline:  
The Case of California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program

by

Jason Daniel Reimann

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Joint Doctor of Education  
with California State University, East Bay

in

Educational Leadership

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Administrative Decision-making in a Time of Resource Decline:  
The Case of California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program

By

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Joint Doctor of Education  
University of California, Berkeley

Judith Warren-Little, Chair

This dissertation is a qualitative study on the decision-making of administrators within California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) teacher induction program. The study focuses on examining how declining resources act as a pressure, how well-established research on cutback management predict the behaviors of the BTSA administrators and how well it predicts the outcomes that result from their decisions. Further, the study looks at different interpretations of BTSA program goals, how administrators decide which elements of the program to protect and which elements to de-emphasize given the declining resources that most programs are facing. To get at all of these issues, four central questions lie at the heart of this dissertation:

- What pressures are facing BTSA administrators?
- How are declining resources and related pressures impacting decision-making by BTSA administrators?
- How do different interpretations of BTSA program goals impact the decision-making process when facing declining resources?
- How well does established cutback management research predict the decisions that BTSA administrators make and the outcomes that result from their decisions?

To get an understanding of the pressures that face BTSA administrators, as well as the legislation and standards that govern BTSA, this study had four phases. The first phase, problem identification & background knowledge, consisted of reviewing the legislation and documents that indicate the goal of the BTSA program and document its process of development. The second phase involved the development of conceptual understanding of why BTSA matters and what strategies cutback management research recommends for preserving the program. The third phase involved two rounds of interviews with state BTSA administrators, district BTS Administrators and state legislators involved with creating laws related to BTSA. Finally all of the data were reviewed using a constructivist approach and organized into themes which were then used to extract findings.

The findings of the study were that there are three key pressures impacting decision-making for BTSA administrators: the pressure to implement cuts, pressure to compromise and pressure to implement the program to fidelity. These three pressures, that run counter to each other have resulted in BTSA administrators taking actions to either resist cuts, smooth organizational decline or compromise to protect key elements of the program. Further, this study concludes that research on cutback management accurately predicts the challenges and behaviors of BTSA administrators as they respond to pressures to cut spending.

For my mother, Linda “Zili” Reimann-Blackston, all of the great teachers of the world and the children we serve.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	
1.1 Context and Background.....	1
1.2 BTSA Program Structure and Funding.....	3
1.3 The Importance of BTSA.....	6
1.4 Purpose of the study and research questions .....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review	
2.1 Literature Review Methodology.....	10
2.2 Previous studies on BTSA.....	10
2.3 BTSA standards and regulations.....	12
2.3.1 SB2042.....	14
2.4 BTSA and the importance of teacher retention in underserved communities.....	15
2.5 Mentoring & Teacher Induction.....	16
2.6 Teacher supply.....	17
2.7 Managing Declining Resources.....	18
2.8 Key points.....	20
Chapter 3: Methods	
3.1 Research Overview.....	22
3.2 Research Questions.....	22
3.3 Conceptual Framework.....	23
3.4 Research Questions.....	23
3.5 Research Setting.....	24
3.6 Analytical Plan.....	25
3.7 Document analysis.....	25
3.8 Interviews.....	26
3.8.1 BTSA administrator interviews.....	27
3.9 Limitations.....	28
Chapter 4: Findings	
4.1 Introduction.....	29
4.2 Pressure to implement cuts: Impact of budget cuts on decision-making.....	30
4.3 The Impact of BTSA staffing cuts.....	32
4.4 The importance of collaboration to the BTSA model .....	38
4.5 The impact of losing collaboration time.....	39
4.6 Pressure to implement program to fidelity: Accreditation.....	42
4.7 Supporting BTSA administrators and support providers .....	43
4.8 District decisions matter.....	46
4.8.1 District decisions matter – Supporting program coordinators.....	46
4.8.2 District decisions matter – Advocating for BTSA and the power of social capital.....	50
4.8.3 District decisions matter – Building social capital.....	51
4.8.4 District decisions matter – Program coordinators.....	53
4.9 Summary of Findings.....	54

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Chapter 5: Conclusion	
5.1 Results.....	58
5.2 Implications .....	60
5.3 Recommendations for BTSA .....	62
5.4 Recommendations for future research .....	62
5.5 Closing comments.....	63

### Figures

Figure 1: California’s Teacher Credentialing Process.....	3
Figure 2: BTSA Program Structure.....	5
Figure 3: Research Setting.....	25
Figure 4: Interview Structure.....	27
Figure 5: BTSA Collaboration Structure.....	39

### Tables

Table 1: Research Overview.....	24
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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Context and Background

Many characterize the state of the teacher labor market as a teacher shortage; however, doing so misses a fundamental point. Overall, teacher attrition and turnover rates are not significantly higher than those for other professions. When compared to social services, nursing and accounting, teacher turnover is just slightly higher than the rate for nurses, just lower than the turnover rate for accountants and approximately half the rate of the turnover rate for social service workers (Harris & Adams, 2007). Socio-economic and racial demographics of schools also have a correlation with the retention rates of teachers. While many school districts have great difficulty filling teacher vacancies, others do not. For example, schools and school districts which lie in historically underserved communities, such as Black, Latino or socio-economically disadvantaged (SED) communities, face higher turnover rates than schools and districts that are predominately White or wealthy (Carroll, et al. 2000, Darling-Hammond, 2004). A 2000 RAND report found that teacher attrition and vacancy rates are more pronounced in districts with large populations of African-American and Latino students (Carroll, et al. 2000). Similarly, socio-economically disadvantaged school teacher attrition rates are 54% higher than those at affluent schools (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Losing teachers at higher rates may mean losing more effective teachers.

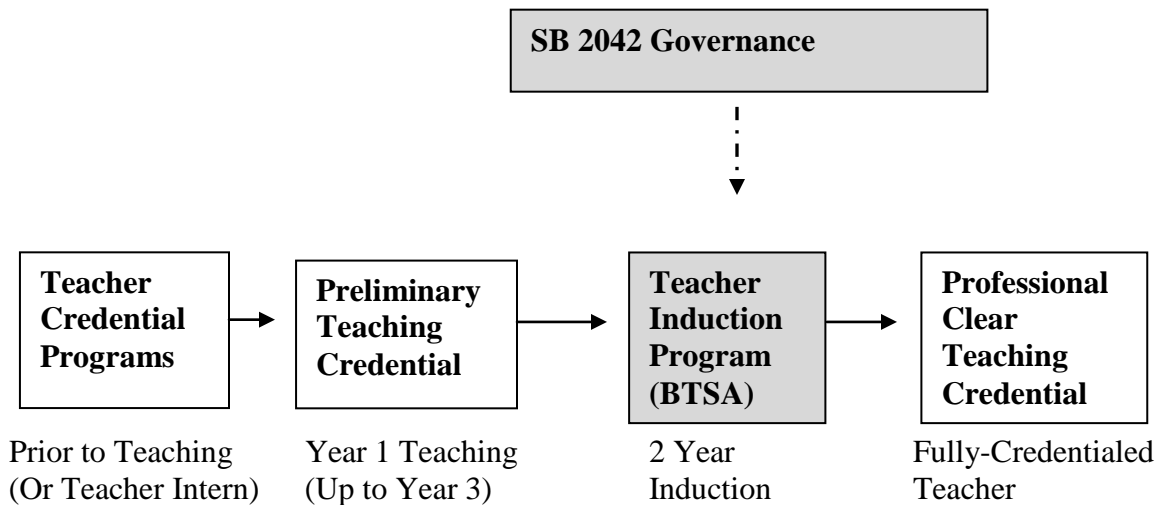
Losing quality teachers is problematic because of the significant impact that teacher quality has on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Greenwald, Hedges, & Allington, 2003; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001; Laine, 1996; Sanders 1996). Some attribute successful teaching to formal training. Trained teachers are often more successful at improving student achievement than those who are untrained (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2002; Darling-Hammond, et al, 2005). Other studies point to personality and demographic characteristics of teachers as being important factors in teacher retention, especially within under-served schools and districts (Greenwald, et al, 1996; Ingersoll, 2005; Levin, 2003). Some research indicates that having a successful teacher for consecutive years can eliminate the achievement gap (Hanushek, et al, 2001), and even improve student performance gains by as much as 54% (Sanders 1996). Retaining these teachers, when practically viable, is an understandable objective of the state and federal legislature, as well as LEAs and districts that serve underserved communities.

California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program (BTSA) is a complex program designed to increase new teacher retention and quality. BTSA grew out of an extensive study launched in 1988 by the state of California, The California New Teacher Project (CNTP). The goal of this program was to identify a system that could be scaled up to create a statewide system for teacher induction that would address the issues

of teacher quality and retention. The CNTP piloted 37 programs, serving a total of approximately 3,000 teachers from 1988 through 1992. The state spent almost \$9 million dollars conducting interviews, questionnaires, rating new teacher performance reviewing necessary documents and records, as well as data analysis (Bartell, 1995, O'Leary, 2001) to study the effectiveness of the pilot programs. The data were then published in the summary report *Success for Beginning Teachers: The California New Teacher Project*. This study analyzed the impact of the programs on teacher quality and retention. Of these programs, BTSA was selected as the preferred induction program for the state. Beyond the work that was done to select for the strongest program, two major studies of BTSA have affirmed the effectiveness of the strategies incorporated into the BTSA program structure (Mitchell, et al, 2007, Tushnet, 2002). With the passage of SB 2042, BTSA became a part of California's required teacher induction process and is required for teachers to receive a full teaching credential.

As indicated in the chart below, although teachers receive a preliminary credential following completion of a teacher credential program, the credential is not considered to be "clear" or a full credential until the BTSA process is completed. This final step, in the process of "clearing" one's credential, falls under the governance of California's Senate Bill 2042 (SB 2042). SB 2042 made BTSA the de facto induction program for the state of California and a requirement for teaching in California on a permanent basis. As the model below illustrates, the induction process follows completion of the teacher credential program as is meant for teachers in their first year of teaching. Upon completion of a teacher education program or alternative certification program, teachers qualify for a preliminary teaching credential, which is good for up to five years. SB 2042 mandates that all new teachers must complete two years of the induction program prior to the end of their fifth year of teaching to receive a full credential, meaning that teachers may wait up to their third year of teaching to participate in BTSA.

Figure 1: California's Teacher Credentialing Process



With the passage of SB 2042, BTSA became an integral part of the credentialing process statewide. This means that every teacher in California participates in an induction program that is aligned to the same program standards and overseen in part by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and California Department of Education (CDE). SB 2042 also articulates the structure of the BTSA program. BTSA is designed to incorporate the input of the various groups that it serves in order to work effectively. In order to accomplish this, the program's structure is complex and involves the CDE, CTC and school districts in its oversight and implementation.

## 1.2 BTSA Program Structure and Funding

BTSA is governed jointly by the CTC, which is the state department responsible for issuing teacher credentials and the CDE. The CDE and CTC collaborate through the BTSA Interagency Taskforce to make statewide programmatic decision for BTSA. BTSA is then broken up into 6 regions, called clusters. A director from each cluster also sits on the interagency taskforce. The cluster directors supervise all BTSA programs within their region. Most BTSA programs are operated by local education agencies (LEAs). This means that the BTSA coordinator for each program is also supervised by a district administrator.

The multiple layers and numerous partners involved with BTSA also create competing interests and objectives for the program. According to an independent evaluation of BTSA, aligning organizational protocols so that information can flow freely between the different organizations involved with BTSA is a challenge, but also improves the program's ability to incorporate the perspectives of its many stakeholders (Tushnet, 2002). Because of its complex structure, BTSA relies heavily on communication and collaboration between the groups involved with the program. During periods in which resources are declining, challenges related to communication and BTSA's inherent complexity may be especially difficult to address. As resources become

scarce, school districts are likely to look to the BTSA block grant as a potential funding source for other essential programs. Not only can this impact lines of communication, but it can create competition for resources.

The LEAs, school districts and county offices of education, use state-provided categorical funds to pay for their programs. The two funding sources that are used most often are the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) allocation and the Teacher Credentialing Block Grant. Because these funding sources are categorical, meaning that they must be spent on very specific types of services, the dollars have been, historically, protected from budgetary pressures. When California's state budget became much worse beginning with the 2009 school year, the categorical funds that are typically used for BTSA were placed into a temporary category known as Tier III. Funds in this category can be used by the district in an unrestricted fashion on a temporary basis. The result of this has been that districts must use effective cutback management skills (Levine, 1978) to ensure that any programs that are being impacted by the change in the funding structure continue to function as effectively as possible despite the severity of the cuts and the impact of Tier III status for BTSA funds.

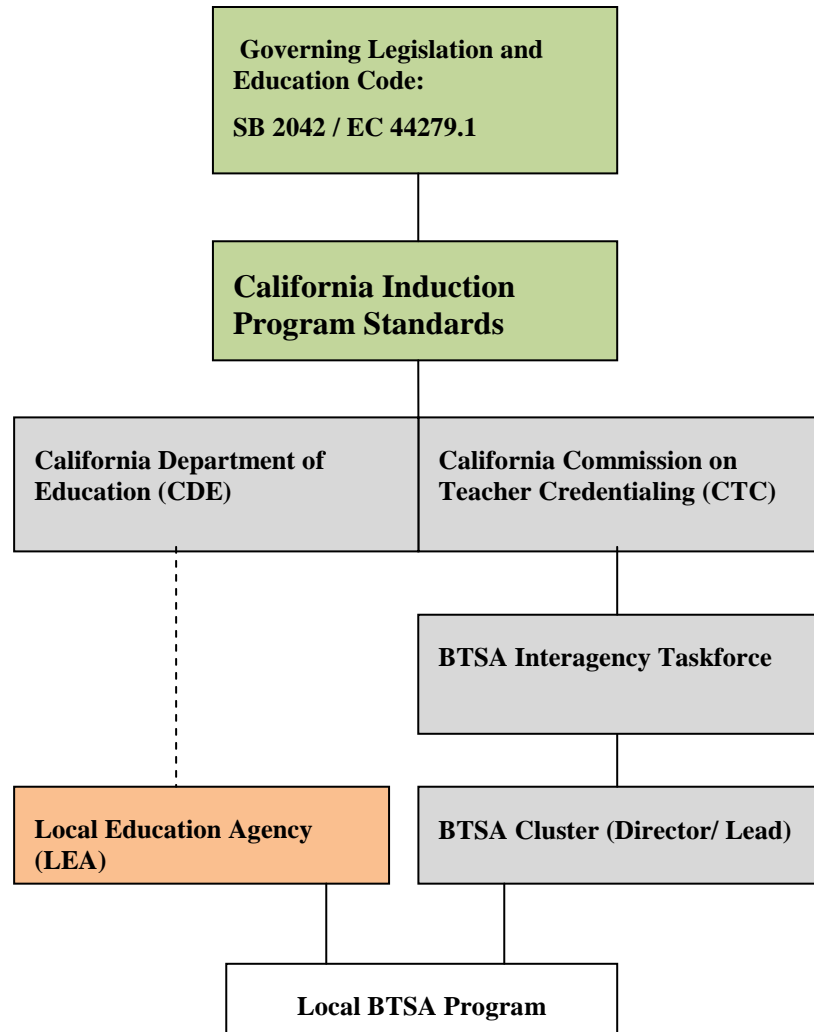
The complexity of BTSA as a program adds to the complexity of the decisions that must be made by BTSA program administrators when making cuts to the program. Because each of the administrators have very different roles within the program structure, one must also consider the various pressures that are placed on these individuals. For example, while BTSA cluster directors face pressure from the CDE and CTC in making decisions regarding BTSA, program coordinators, who are often employees of the Local Education Agency (LEA) must also contend with pressures that are placed on them from their direct supervisors within the school district or county office of education that employs them. Further, district administrators that supervise BTSA coordinators must carefully balance decisions regarding where to cut spending on BTSA and how to support and retain remaining program staff.

As mentioned previously, the organizational structure of BTSA is complex. Although there are other legislative articles that impact BTSA and that contributed to its formation, BTSA is primarily governed by Senate Bill 2042 (SB 2042), which made BTSA the primary means through which teachers may clear their teaching credential. SB 2042, in turn resulted in writing Education Code 44279.1 which is the education law that governs BTSA. From the time that SB 2042 was signed into law, BTSA has been co-governed by the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). Representatives of each of these groups sit on the BTSA Interagency Taskforce, which makes the executive decisions for the BTSA program. The BTSA program is then divided into six clusters. Each cluster has a cluster director who also sits on the BTSA Interagency Taskforce. The BTSA program is evaluated using the California Induction Program Standards, the current version written by the CTC in 2008. The local BTSA program is then operated by whatever agency is providing the program, usually an LEA (school district or county office of education). The program is supervised and evaluated by the cluster director, but the BTSA coordinator is also usually supervised by an LEA administrator.

Below is a visual representation of the organizational structure of BTSA. The boxes shaded green represent the governing rules and legislation of BTSA. The gray-

filled boxes represent the elements of BTSA that are directly controlled by the State of California, including the California Department of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). The auburn-filled box represents the Local Educational Agency (LEA), although the LEA itself is under the supervision of the CDE to some degree, for the purposes of BTSA, its direct contact with the LEA is minimal. This loose connection is indicated by a dashed line. The representation below also reflects the competing influence of the LEA and the BTSA cluster / State of California. Both the state and the LEA have direct supervisory roles with local BTSA programs. The state exerts influence over the program through the cluster director, who reports directly to the BTSA Interagency taskforce and evaluates the BTSA program. The LEA exerts influence over the local BTSA program by controlling funding, evaluating the employees of the program and making ground-level management decisions such as hiring, termination and funding.

Figure 2: BTSA Program Structure



The BTSA program is governed by two separate government agencies (CTC and CDE) and local BTSA programs are supervised by both the BTSA cluster director and the district administration within the LEA. This structure has numerous layers and partners, all of whom must cooperate and collaborate to create an effective program. The organizational structure is complex, but also built to encourage collaboration between groups, especially the CDE and CTC. In 2002, West Ed conducted a comprehensive, independent assessment of BTSA. In the study, the team stated that the “interorganizational structure of BTSA” adds to the quality of the program and helps the program to better respond to the “complexity of California.” (Tushnet, 2002).

### **1.3 The Importance of BTSA**

Keeping the best teachers in the schools and districts that need them is a core element of addressing student achievement and equity. BTSA addresses some of the most pressing challenges facing California’s public schools, especially in schools that serve African American, Latino and poor communities: a high rate of teacher turnover, disproportionately high rates of unqualified teachers, and declining economic resources. The retention of credentialed teachers is especially important in historically underserved communities. Though they often have lower academic achievement--as measured by standardized testing, graduation rates and college entrance rates--high-poverty, Latino and African-American schools have low rates of credentialed teachers. The presence of fully-credentialed teachers is important because credentialed teachers often possess the content-knowledge and training necessary to improve learning. The issue of having quality, qualified teachers cannot be separated from the issue of teacher retention.

Research indicates that teacher training and content-knowledge correlate positively to student performance (Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2004). Schools with large populations of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (SED), African-American, and Latino students also have the lowest rates of experienced and highly-trained teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2004). The problems that schools and districts see with teacher supply are related to retention more than recruitment (Ingersoll, 2001). Additional research indicates that effective mentoring and induction programs are effective means of retaining teachers (Guarino, 2004, Reynolds, et al, 2002, Smith and Ingersoll, 2004).

Teacher quality is an important factor in improving academic performance. Having a successful teacher for consecutive years can significantly reduce the achievement gap (Hanushek, et al, 2001), and improve student performance gains by as much as 54% (Sanders 1996). Darling-Hammond (2000) suggests that teacher quality is the most important factor. In her mixed-methods study of education in all fifty states, Darling-Hammond found that teacher qualifications are correlated to student achievement in reading and mathematics more strongly than other factors. The data from Darling-Hammond’s study shows strong positive relationships between student achievement and several factors including teacher certification, content knowledge and pedagogical training. Pedagogical training, however, has the strongest positive correlation with

student achievement. This highlights the need to retain trained teachers and continue professional development for new and continuing teachers in instructional strategies.

BTSA is one of the first effective attempts at improving teacher quality and retention. There have been other unsuccessful attempts to address teacher attrition and quality through legislative action. The 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), termed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), purportedly addressed the issue of teacher quality with its “highly qualified teacher” requirements. In California, the qualified teacher shortage was compounded by class-size reduction (CSR) legislation which heightened the state’s ever-present teacher shortage (Reed, et al., 2006). States such as California addressed, in part, NCLB’s requirements and its own teacher retention challenges with Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA). BTSA was incorporated into the state’s official credentialing and induction process with the passage of California SB 2042 and has been shown to be an effective tool in retaining credentialed teachers. By implementing effective mentoring and induction programs, teacher turnover, vacancy, and teacher quality issues may be significantly impacted. For most districts and schools in California, BTSA is the primary tool for meeting this need.

In the face of these challenges, the state has sought to address the turnover and teacher quality challenge in part through BTSA. As the budgetary constraints in California become more pronounced, awareness of effective skills for maintaining BTSA through appropriate cutback management techniques is especially important because BTSA plays such a critical role in teacher recruitment and retention. With declining resources, the decisions that administrators make regarding BTSA have been subject to increasing pressure.

BTSA is an induction program that is aimed at retaining teachers and improving teacher quality. BTSA participating teachers take part in ongoing formative assessment and reflection and are provided a mentor. The induction and mentoring elements of BTSA are significant because teacher induction and mentoring have been shown to have significant impact on teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2004, Kelley, 2004, Wong, 2006). This is important because teacher retention has been found to be the primary factor in addressing California’s teacher shortage problem (Ingersoll, 2002). The shortage of qualified teachers is especially pronounced in SED communities and communities of color, due to the high rate of turnover in the schools that service their communities (Carroll, et al. 2000).

The shortage of teachers in SED communities and communities of color is especially problematic because it contributes to the achievement gap. Teacher experience and teacher quality are not only a factor in the achievement gap (Hanushek, et al, 2001), but some research suggests that teacher quality is the most important factor to shrinking the achievement gap (Darling-Hammond, 2000). This makes the success of programs that retain effective teachers especially important in districts that serve historically underserved groups. In California, the primary tool to address the retention and quality of new teachers is BTSA.

#### 1.4 Purpose of the study and research questions

The California education system's fiscal problems became much more pronounced with the beginning of the 2009 school year. In an effort to help school districts adjust to declining resources, certain categorical funds were placed into Tier III status. Funds placed in this area can be spent however districts choose. When the BTSA block grant was placed into Tier III, most school districts chose to redirect much of this money into other areas, reducing the amount of funding that is available to fund BTSA programs. This has placed increased pressures on BTSA programs and the administrators responsible for running them.

The pressures on educational administrators to make tough choices have increased substantially with the decline of fiscal resources. Deciding where to cut, how to cut and how to respond to cuts becomes more difficult as cuts become deeper and important programs can no longer be protected. Identifying which pressures are affecting decision-making, and what process BTSA administrators are using to respond to these pressures are critical steps in understanding the changes that are currently happening within BTSA programs. Gaining understanding here also helps in exposing the best practices to respond to resource decline. Previous studies of BTSA have indicated that program coordinators and cluster directors are knowledgeable about program goals and have a strong sense of commitment to the program's core elements (Tushnet, 2002, Mitchell, et al, 2007). A question to be asked is how leaders decide what elements of the program to cast away and which to preserve.

More specifically, the purpose of this study is to determine the impact of the various pressures on BTSA administrators and understand how the pressures impact decision-making. There is an especially strong focus on looking at how declining resources act as a pressure, how well established research on cutback management predict the behaviors of the BTSA administrators and how well it predicts the outcomes that result from their decisions. Further, the study looks at different interpretations of BTSA program goals, how administrators decide which elements of the program to protect and which elements to de-emphasize given the declining resources that most programs are facing. To address all of these issues, this study focuses on four central questions:

- What pressures are facing BTSA administrators?
- How are declining resources and related pressures impacting decision-making by BTSA administrators?
- How do different interpretations of BTSA program goals impact the decision-making process when facing declining resources?
- How well does established cutback management research predict the decisions that BTSA administrators make and the outcomes that result from their decisions?

The importance and purpose of this study have to do with the importance of BTSA, especially to schools and districts that serve historically underserved communities, as well as the importance of understanding decision-making behaviors and their effects in times of resource decline. Because BTSA is central to the state's and most



schools districts' strategies for retaining new teachers and improving new teacher quality, it is important to look closely at the decisions that are being made regarding BTSA, especially as elements of the program are being taken away due to declining resources. Looking at these behaviors and their impact may be helpful in identifying effective ways to preserve the integrity of BTSA program during austere times.

Equally important are the more general lessons that may be gleaned from looking at the decision-making process that BTSA administrators are undergoing related to resource decline and comparing these behaviors' effectiveness. Identifying practices that are effective when cutting resources from a public program may be of use beyond the BTSA program. Hopefully, readers who are facing similar challenges in other arenas will be able to use some of the best practices identified by this study and avoid some of the pitfalls.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Literature Review Methodology**

Finding research on the topics of Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) involved searches of the internet and scholarly databases, recommendations for research from experts in the field, review of literature reviews and consultation with academic researchers, field experts and legislators. Searches on Google, Google scholar, NCES, RAND and ERIC used the following search terms were included in searches. Teacher recruit\*, teacher retention, alternative ret\*, teacher induction, teacher turnover, SB 2042, California New Teacher Project, annual district budget expenditures. Examination of the California Department of Education website, as well as the Commission on Teacher Credentialing website was used to locate official reports, legal mandates and legislation associated with BTSA.

#### **2.2 Previous studies on BTSA**

There are two major studies that have been conducted on BTSA, the first of which was the Final Report of the Independent Evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program. This study, which was conducted by WestEd and SRI in 2002, concluded that BTSA was successful in retaining teachers. The study found that while teacher retention was similar to that of other states overall, BTSA had significant impact on second year teachers. Overall, the report indicated that the program's participants were retained at a 93% rate following the end of both their first and second years of participation. With the exception of two "outlier" programs, the report found very little variation in the success of the programs, regardless of region, size of the program, or degree of urbanization, in being effective at retaining new teachers (Tushnet, et al, 2002).

The retention of these newer teachers may also have a large impact on teacher quality. The most common reason for teachers not returning after the second year of teaching is non-reelection. In California, the teacher probationary period lasts for two years. At the end of each of the first two years, districts may release teachers without cause. This process is known as non-reelection. Non-reelection is a different process from reduction-in-force or lay-offs. Non-reelection is usually recommended by the beginning teacher's evaluator and may be the result of poor performance. Because non-reelection is "without cause," it is not possible to determine the specific reasons that these teachers were not brought back to school districts. One may assume however, that a decrease in the rate of non-reelection indicates an increase in the rate of new teachers that were successful in being retained past their probationary period. This may indicate improved performance or alignment with school and district goals.

The West Ed report also highlighted the importance of having quality BTSA program coordinators and directors. The report highlights three important qualities as especially important: the ability to access PT retention data, forming strong relationships with BTSA participants and others involved with the program, including district personnel, and finding outside resources to help support the program.

The 2002 study also highlighted some of the financial and structural challenges that face the program. Some challenges have been addressed, such as some shortcomings of the CFASST system, which has been resolved, in part through thoroughly revising the CFASST structure. Another was scaling up consistent procedures. The West Ed study concluded that the complex organizational structure worked, up to that point because of positive working relationships, but recognized a need for more formalized procedures. The BTSA consortium responded to the West Ed study by creating *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Induction Programs* and in 2008, the state adopted new induction program standards.

The WestEd study highlighted the organizational complexity of the program and the numerous agencies that are involved. The study stated that the complexity adds to quality of the program because it is inclusive of the numerous groups involved in public education. It also noted that there are problems with communication between the various organizations involved with BTSA. Specifically, the study pointed out that some organizational policies prohibited organizations from sharing information, such as teacher demographic information with other groups.

The second major study of BTSA was led by the University of California, Riverside in 2007 (Mitchell, et al, 2007). This study scrutinized the impact of BTSA, beginning with questions regarding the “monopoly” that BTSA has over teacher induction in the state of California. The 2007 report also found wider variation in the success of programs. One of the important variables for program success that the report indicates is the quality and beliefs of the BTSA program administrators. Likewise, the greatest challenge to the success of a BTSA program is the level of administrative authority of BTSA program directors, and the difficulty that some have in getting full cooperation from LEA “district executives.”

While the Riverside report does confirm the significant improvements in teacher retention that the WestEd study indicated, it points out that the correlation between BTSA’s formation and the drastic increase in overall teacher retention may not be due to BTSA. Despite this, the report found that among participating teachers in BTSA, retention rates were well above the rates of retention for teachers overall. The report further indicated that BTSA programs have done a good job of documenting the success of retaining the new participating teachers within BTSA. Although the Riverside and WestEd reports may not agree on the overall impact of BTSA on teacher retention, both reports affirm the impact that BTSA has on retaining new teachers, especially those who are BTSA participants.

In accord with the findings of the WestEd report, the Riverside study also indicated that the collaborative, yet complex structure of the BTSA program contributes to its effectiveness. The Riverside study also added that BTSA program coordinators being district employees and having the interests of their respective districts in mind is an

asset of the program. The group found that because they are responsible for the program's success within their district, the level of responsibility that they have for their program's success is increased. Further, the balance of perspective between the cluster directors and the program coordinators increases each cluster's ability to ascertain each program's effectiveness and appropriateness. The Riverside study also highlighted the need to improve the level of compensation for BTSA support providers, increase funding for BTSA clusters and increase the status held by program coordinators.

Both studies point to the level of collaboration and program complexity as both a resource for BTSA, as well as a challenge. The need to ensure that communication is ongoing and happening throughout the organization is also highlighted. Both studies also affirmed BTSA's well-established effectiveness at retaining participating teachers at rates well-above the national and state averages.

### **2.3 BTSA standards and regulations**

With BTSA, state legislation and the state induction standards are the guidelines administrators must consult when making decisions regarding BTSA. Because the laws and standards do not outline specific behaviors that BTSA administrators or participants should engage in, like most standards and laws, they leave a great deal of space for individual programs to make decisions. My study will consider the ways that BTSA administrators interact with these guidelines and laws to make decisions on how BTSA operates. Further, because of the pressures that have been placed on BTSA programs, and thus their administrators, due to budget cuts, there may be elements of the program that administrators feel compelled to scale back and others that they choose to protect or emphasize.

Some of this work has been done with previous studies. Hafner and Maxie, in 2006 reviewed the contents of SB 2042 and conducted a qualitative study on the effects of this legislation. With their study, the group identified what they felt were the goals of the BTSA legislation. They identified seven goals that their work indicated was at the heart of the legislation. Gaining an understanding of the goals of BTSA will not only involve reading the legislation and studies associated with the legislation, but also conducting semi-structured interviews with the writers of the authors of this legislation. These interviews will be designed to understand the views and objectives of the principals when writing the legislation.

Previous research has indicated that the goals of SB 2042 are:

1. To infuse subject-specific pedagogy and instruction aligned to K-12 Standards;
2. To increase the consistency of candidate assessment;
3. To ensure the teacher education programs were developmental and sequential;
4. To map forward and backwards between a conceptual framework and outcomes;
5. To integrate coursework (theory) and fieldwork (practice);

6. To develop reflective practice and practitioners; and
  7. To infuse the ability to teach English learners in all programs.
- (Hafner & Maxie, 2006)

The overall program goals that are articulated within SB 2042 are made more specific through the induction program standards. The California Induction Standards were initially designed alongside the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs) in 1997. The CSTPs are used in many school districts as the standards for teacher evaluation in California. The goal in developing the induction standards and CSTPs together was to align the work that was being done during the induction period with the ongoing professional standards that teachers are responsible for meeting throughout their careers. In 2008, the induction standards were revised, perhaps in response to recommendations from the WestEd study. The new standards emphasized the program elements of induction and included specific program goals. The new standards include the pre-conditions for establishing a program, including the education code references; core standards, which outline the logistical design requirements for the program (teacher admissions requirements, the instructor qualifications, etc.); and program standards which outline the overall objectives for an induction program. The program standards are divided into two categories, program design and effective teaching. The program standards, as a whole, define the work that should be done by BTSA programs. Below are the BTSA program goals, divided into the two aforementioned categories, along with a brief summary of each. The bold text reflects the category titles and program standards:

*Category A: Programs Exhibit Effective Design Principles*

This category is centered on the program structure and things that the BTSA program is to emphasize as a program.

*Program Standard 1: Program Rationale and Design*

This standard mandates that BTSA programs provide quality professional development and develop a vision that emphasizes *formative assessment* and collaboration among other things. The concept of *formative assessment* is defined in this standard as a system of inquiry, whereby teachers assess their progress in meeting the CSTPs.

*Program Standard 2: Communication and Collaboration*

As mentioned previously, BTSA is a complex intervention that requires a great deal of collaboration and communication between the various stakeholder groups. This standard mandates that the BTSA program be “articulated” with other professional development programs associated with other organizations, especially LEAs and establish itself as a member of the larger education community, especially the LEA.

*Program Standard 3: Support Providers and Professional Development Providers*

This standard mandates that support providers be familiar with effective mentoring strategies, as well as the CSTPs.

*Program Standard 4: Formative Assessment System*

This standard ties into the emphasis on formative assessment outlined in standard one, but also mandates that, as a part of the program, participating teachers develop a formal process for reflecting on their practice and setting professional goals that are aligned with the CSTPs. This plan should include an Individualized Induction Plan and a Teacher Performance Assessment.

*Category B: Programs Provide Opportunities for Participants to Demonstrate Effective Teaching*

This category is centered on the instructional outcomes that effective BTSA programs should emphasize

*Program Standard 5: Pedagogy*

This standard indicates that participating teachers should be trained on the best teaching practices.

*Program Standard 6: Universal Access: Equity for all Students*

This standard emphasizes equitable teaching practices for students from historically underserved groups, English learners, special populations (students with special needs) and advanced learners.

### **2.3.1 SB 2042**

BTSA is governed primarily by SB 2042. The relationships between the governing agencies of the program are detailed by the legislation. The program's purpose was also written into the legislation. This legislation essentially acts as a contract governing the relationships between the various agents involved with BTSA. Like most legislation, however, SB2042 and related education code and the induction standards are somewhat general in terms of describing specific actions that agencies should take when implementing BTSA. As Levine's work predicts, the legislation does nothing to indicate how to deal with declining resources.

Existing literature on SB 2042 and BTSA has had an effect on how these groups relate. Hafner & Maxie's 2006 study of SB2042 concluded that the legislation did increase "inter-institutional collaboration." Upon further review by UC Riverside and the RAND Corporation, however, it became evident that there were limitations, especially surrounding exchange of personnel information. This created a dynamic in which trust between the organizations was challenged.

Further, some issues are exposed by the Riverside report. Section 5 of the recommendations section highlights the need to increase funding to compensate the many groups involved with BTSA. The group ties compensation to the ability of the program to the ability to keep teachers tied to the goals of BTSA.

## **2.4 BTSA and the importance of teacher retention in underserved communities**

In 2004, the RAND Corporation's did a comprehensive review of teacher recruitment and retention literature (Guarino, et al, 2004) and found that schools that had large percentages of students from underserved communities had higher teacher attrition rates. Most of the studies reviewed found that urban schools and districts had the greatest challenges, although public schools have a slightly higher retention rate than private schools. What was most relevant to the impact of BTSA was the finding that schools that provide mentoring, induction and collegial support have the best retention rates (Guarino 2004). It is important to note that many private schools do not require a teaching credential for all teachers, and thus may not require the BTSA training or offer an alternative form of mentoring or induction.

Teacher retention is a challenge, especially for schools that service historically underserved communities. Because teacher turnover is especially high in schools and districts that serve African American, Latino and socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) youth, the need for effective mentoring and induction programs is greater in these schools and districts. Further, because the level of funding in these districts is typically much lower than for districts that serve wealthier, predominately white and Asian communities, there is less surplus funding to provide induction and mentoring programs beyond BTSA. This makes BTSA an especially important program for schools and districts that serve communities of color and SED populations.

A substantial body of research indicates that increasing teacher salaries improves teacher recruitment and retention rates (Murnane and Olsen, 1989; Murnane, 1990; Stinebrickner 2001b). Teacher salary increases may be effective, however, the current austere conditions with most public agencies make this an unlikely resolution. In fact, many school districts are passing on health care costs to teachers and reducing teacher salaries because they lack funds to support the current levels of compensation. Additionally, in districts with restrictive collective bargaining agreements, it may not be possible to provide additional compensation to teachers in under-served schools, due to the boundaries set by union contracts. Additionally, other research has found salary level, though correlated with teacher attrition, to only have a weak correlation (Darling-Hammond, 2004).

According to 2006 U.S. Department of Education data, the average California school allocates 67% of its budget to instruction and instructional salaries (Tab, 2006). On average another 32.9% is allocated to operations (16% goes to utility bills, facility maintenance, etc.) administrative (12.4 % goes to principals, superintendent, etc.) and support service (4.5% librarians, nurses, counselors, books, and materials) expenses. This leaves .1% funding in the average district to increase teacher salaries.

Further, when one considers the disparity in funding between districts, there is often less room to increase salaries in less affluent districts. According to a 2007 report by the U.S. Department of Education, the poorest 5% of school districts received an average of \$7118 per pupil, per year; the median school district received an average \$8800, while the wealthiest 5% received an average of \$16,181 per pupil, per year, (Zhou, 2007). This indicates that poorer districts receive an average of 57% less money,

per pupil, to spend on costly retention strategies, such as increasing teacher salaries than wealthier school districts. In California, where per pupil spending tends to be lower than in other states, funding for stand-alone recruitment and retention programs is especially tight.

These factors increase the reliance of most public school districts on BTSA for their induction and mentoring for new teachers. Because school districts that serve poorer communities and communities of color have fewer resources, on average, than wealthier districts and those that serve larger populations of white and Asian students, the ability of these districts to employ induction and mentoring programs aside from BTSA is diminished. Further, because the teacher turnover rates for districts that serve historically underserved groups are greater, the mentoring and induction dollars have to be spread thinner as there are likely to be more vacancies each year and thus more new teachers to be mentored. This makes BTSA an especially important program in addressing equity concerns for many districts in California.

## **2.5 Mentoring & Teacher Induction**

Teacher induction programs have a significant effect on teacher retention and mobility (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004, Wong, 2006). Specifically, new teachers who are provided mentors in the same subject area and who collaborate more frequently were less likely to change schools or leave the profession. Additionally, combining induction programs with collaboration, teacher networking and adding teacher resources (such as an aide) had a cumulative effect where some of the other factors alone showed no effect. By combining all four factors, attrition and transference was reduced by 23% when compared to teachers with no induction at all. Finally, induction programs, and the associated professional development, help teachers fit with the professional development and reform goals of the district (Wong, 2006).

Successful alternative certification (AC) programs and induction programs utilize mentor programs as a support mechanism for new teachers (Minarik, 2003; Reynolds et al, 2002, Stoddart, 1990). Most AC programs include mentors as a key component to the support network for new teachers. Access to a highly-skilled, successful colleague is general practice in most professions. This often happens informally. The nature of education dictates that teachers be isolated from these experienced teachers for most of the instructional day because each is in his or her own classroom. A formal mentor program provides newer teachers with access to more experienced professionals who are familiar with the challenges of the classroom, often from their own school. These mentors are often relied upon for practical professional advice (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Induction programs that do not contain a formal mentor program undermine their effectiveness (Wong, 2006).

There is variation between public and private schools, in terms of the utilization of induction and mentoring programs (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Both types of programs are more commonly found in public than private schools. Accordingly, private school turnover rates are higher than those at public schools (Harris, 2007). Private schools, however, are beginning to employ both strategies more frequently.

Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) programs provide counseling, mentoring and encourage reflection on best teaching practices. BTSA



programs are generally funded with professional development funds provided by the state of California and are required for all new public-school teachers. Because AC programs often use the same funding source as BTSA, most BTSA participants are newer teachers who have already received a credential.

Although BTSA participants have completed the necessary coursework for a preliminary credential, they still are in need of additional support as new teachers and continuing professional development. Induction programs such as BTSA are positively correlated to new teacher retention (Reed et al, 2006). BTSA provides a support system through continuing professional development and continued professional contact with other new teachers. Induction programs, such as BTSA, when operated effectively are an essential factor in acculturating new teachers to district norms and practices (Wong, 2006).

## **2.6 Teacher supply**

There are other factors related to teacher retention that BTSA does not have direct effect on. District personnel practices have a significant effect on the recruitment of new teachers (Levin et al., 2000). Late hiring deadlines often push highly-qualified teachers away from urban districts. Applicants often are not informed of human resource decisions for months after applications are submitted. Collective bargaining agreements have an impact on the recruitment of new teachers (Levin et al., 2000). If retiring and departing teachers are allowed to give notice too late in the school year, Levin's study reports, then districts may miss opportunities to hire better teachers. Teacher transfer requirements also impede the ability of school districts to make the best decisions regarding school staffing. Districts' inability to place teachers where they are needed most undermines their capacity to address staffing needs in schools with the greatest shortages. Problematic teacher transfer requirements are particularly acute in urban districts and can affect both recruitment and retention rates. A sociological analysis of SASS responses on why teachers leave the profession shows that teacher mis-assignments are also common in education (Ingersoll, 2005). That is, teachers are often teaching outside of their area of expertise. According to Smith and Ingersoll (2004), 20% of secondary teachers are teaching out of their subject area, usually due to a mismatch between available teaching assignments and teachers' preparation rather than a general lack of training. NCLB purportedly addresses this problem by requiring all teachers to be "highly qualified" in the subject area they are teaching. As noted previously, however, "highly qualified teachers" may not have any formal pedagogical training in their subject area.

The issue of teacher supply hinges on the ability of schools and districts to retain teachers, recruitment is only a secondary factor (Ingersoll, 2002). While the focus of many districts has been active recruitment, this may be a misguided approach. This perspective is supported by Ingersoll's analysis of 1998 SASS data on teacher turnover. Eleven percent of teachers leave the profession by the end of their first year. By the end of their fourth year, 33% of teachers have left the profession. By the end of their fifth year, 39% of teachers have left the profession entirely.

There is also a great deal of variation in the retention rates between school types and schools with different student and community demographics (Carroll, et al. 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Harris, 2007; Ingersoll, 2002). Teacher attrition is 14.5%

overall, as compared with 11% with the rest of the American workforce (Ingersoll, 2001). The differences between private and public schools are even more significant. The public school teacher turnover rate is 23.2 percent, while the turnover rate for private school teachers 18.9 percent. The lowest attrition rates of all types of schools are in low poverty, public schools with nine percent annual turnover. The schools with the highest turnover rates are often African-American, Latino and SED schools (Carroll, et al. 2000).

Poor salaries, poor support from school administration, and “unmotivated students” are the most common responses that leaving teachers give when asked why they are leaving the profession. Ingersoll’s (2002) analysis of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) “teacher follow-up survey” indicates these are the most prevalent reasons for teachers leaving the profession. Of the teachers that left the profession, 46 percent cited poor salary as a reason for leaving the profession. A lack of administrative support (34%), student discipline (23%) and lack of student motivation (22%) were also common reasons for leaving the profession. Availability of teacher aides, for example, has not been shown to correlate with teacher retention (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Other research has found that there are distinct sociological reasons for teachers leaving the profession (Ingersoll, 2005). Such research indicates that the root of the problem is a lack of stature for the teaching profession. That is, teaching is seen as “semi-skilled work” instead of being seen as a highly-skilled, professional occupation. Retention rates of alternatively certified teachers are correlated to the initial motivation they have to enter the profession (Stevens et al., 1993). Those who entered the profession because they had no other professional options, or because of the convenience and practicality of the work schedule, were significantly more likely to leave the profession earlier than those who entered teaching because they have a desire teach, or were seeking a more meaningful career. BTSA is designed to help teachers reflect on their practice and commit to ongoing self-reflection and improvement. This element of the program is especially important in the training of alternatively-certified teachers. Schools located in SED communities rely more heavily on non-credentialed teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2005) and alternatively certified teachers. Additionally, by pairing new teachers with more experienced teachers in their subject area, BTSA helps to reinforce formal professional development offered through teacher education programs.

## **2.7 Managing Declining Resources**

The research on managing declining resources offers some insight into best practices that ensure the integrity of the program despite declining resources. Defining the program’s mission or goals in a way that allows the program to navigate reductions in available resources is a central tenet of effective cutback management (Mueller, et al, 2001). Making a decision to change or reduce goals in order to adapt to circumstances is most likely if those involved see the reduction in resources as long-term or “stable.”

Further, BTSA administrators must also consider the best practices of *cutback management*, which is “managing organizational change toward lower levels of resource consumption and organizational activity” (Levine, 1979). The problem that organizations often face with cutback management is that systems cannot usually be scaled back neatly in the same way that they can grow during abundant periods. The impact of cuts to one

area of a program can cause a ripple-effect of problems throughout the organization, complicating the process of deciding how and where to make cuts. The historical knowledge that employees have, the resources that programs have accumulated, the systems of redundancy, that act as insurance, in case of turnover and emergency situations are among the numerous factors that must be considered when making cuts. The effect of cutting one position may have implications to many others and must be considered carefully before making decisions.

Additionally, because the first elements of a program to be cut are usually in the data management, clerical and other areas farthest away from direct service, the resources are often not available to gather data about the organization to make informed decisions about where to and how to reorganize resources. Managers often view the clerical departments and data management departments as good choices for good cuts. While it may be better to lose a clerk than individuals responsible for providing direct service, it is also important to remember that the clerical and data management staff members are useful in gathering information needed to decide the best strategy for cutting back.

Another challenge that Levine points out is that during periods of austerity, it is often the most talented people who will choose to leave an organization because they are the most capable of finding employment elsewhere. These individuals are termed *free exiters* by Levine. Levine highlights the importance of making accommodations where possible to retain these talented staff members. The effect of losing talented staff is heightened by the loss of redundancy that usually precedes large cuts. In times when resources are not scarce, an organization may have numerous individuals who have been trained and are able to perform the same function. This redundancy decreases the impact of losing individual employees. As cuts become more drastic, these layers of redundancy are often eliminated, making the loss of key personnel more painful to the organization.

Another area of concern that is typical during a period of cuts is dealing with unfunded mandates. This problem emerges when organizations are charged with the task of delivering a specific service or completing a task that they are not receiving enough funds to do. Because the governing agencies who make the mandates do not typically take budgets into account when making or adjusting rules, it is likely that organizations will have to contend with adhering to the full requirements of unfunded mandates.

Of course, there are different causes for the organizational decline that leads to cutbacks. One of the most common causes that currently face many public organizations is *environmental entropy*. *Environmental entropy* occurs when the underlying resources an organization depends on begin to decline. A shrinking tax base, new tax structure or other factors that limit the resources from coming into an organization fall in this category. When dealing with reductions in resources that stem from external factors, strategies like targeting the most critical problems and planning with preservation of the program in mind, are good ideas to make the organizational tightening less traumatic to the organization.

One area where the research is not clear is how to make cuts within an organization. Making cuts equitable sounds fair and helps in bringing coalition members on-board with the decisions to cut (Behn, 1985). As Behn points out, making equitable cuts helps with keeping allies through the process and allowing the formation of

coalitions with different interested parties. Levine (1978) points out, however, that making equal sized cuts penalizes elements of the organization that have been more efficient during more prosperous times and does not differentiate between more important players and elements of the organization that must be preserved. Furthermore, as Levine highlights, more “equitable” strategies like hiring freezes and reductions in force by seniority usually penalize women and historically disadvantaged groups disproportionately because they are more likely to be the last hired or the next in line to be hired.

Organizations must also make decisions about how to respond to cuts. Among the choices are whether to focus on defining organizational goals and defining the group’s mission (Mueller, et al, 2001), smooth the process of cuts or to find methods for undermining or resisting the cuts (Levine, 1978). When responding to environmental entropy, Levine outlines strategies to smooth organizational decline. He advocates “targeting” the core organizational challenges, yielding concessions to allies to retain them and planning with core program goals in mind. Conversely, public organizations can often resist cuts by finding new sources of revenue or strengthening the political position on of the program.

## 2.8 Key points

The literature related to BTSA covers a wide variety of issues, ranging from teacher retention and quality to cutback management. Within this variety of literature a host of findings emerge. From the findings, certain core ideas can be gleaned that are central to providing a quality BTSA program that serves the needs of its district and the students that the district serves, even in difficult budgetary climates. Below are some of the important points from this literature review:

- **BTSA is effective at retaining teachers** – Two major studies of BTSA confirmed that new teachers participating in BTSA are retained at much higher rates than other teachers. While there is no consensus on whether BTSA has caused overall teacher retention to improve, teacher retention rates have improved overall since BTSA’s inception.
- **Higher rates of teacher retention are important to schools and districts that serve historically underserved communities** – New teachers are more likely to leave schools that have large populations of students of color. New teachers are also more likely to leave schools in low-income areas than in wealthy areas. Having qualified, experienced teachers affects student performance.

Low-income districts also have fewer resources to create independent mentoring and induction programs beyond BTSA. This makes BTSA doubly-important for them.

- **Collaboration is an important element of BTSA** – BTSA’s complex structure makes it reliant on effective lines of communication and collaboration. Having a collaborative design allows BTSA to incorporate the interests of all of its

stakeholder groups and helps the program to meet the needs of all involved groups.

- **BTSA's goals are captured by the California induction standards and SB 2042. The primary elements of these two legal mandates include:**
  - An emphasis on effective teaching
  - Being reflective on effective practices / formative assessment
  - An emphasis on communication and collaboration
  - Mentoring / teacher retention & support
  - Equity
  
- **Research on declining resources provides a framework through which to understand the actions of BTSA administrators who are facing budget cuts. Especially important are five themes:**
  - **Identify core organizational goals and beliefs** – maintaining the integrity of a program during austerity means deciding which elements to protect from cuts and which can be sacrificed.
  - **Ripple effect** – there may be unanticipated consequences of program cuts. Losing one position may impact the other positions that remain. Systems of redundancy can be important.
  - **Free-exiters** – the most talented and most essential members of an organization are often the individuals with the greatest opportunities to leave. Providing support and attention to the needs of these individuals is an important part of retaining them.
  - **Unfunded mandates** – losing resources rarely means that responsibilities will be taken away. Often, programs facing declining resources find that that they are less able to fulfill program requirements.
  - **Smoothing organizational decline versus resisting cuts** – Levine highlights that managers will need to decide on the best approach to responding to cuts. Either they can find ways to smooth organizational decline by implementing cuts in ways that are as painless as possible, or they may resist cuts by advocating for the program or finding new funding sources.

## Chapter 3

### Methods

#### 3.1 Research Overview

This study examines the decision-making processes that BTSA administrators undertake when implementing the BTSA program within two large urban school districts. Taking a deep, narrow slice of each program from cluster directors to the administrators responsible for implementing the program within each distinct setting allows for a fuller understanding of what is happening in these two districts and why. School districts, California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), and the California Department of Education (CDE) all play roles with the implementation of BTSA<sup>1</sup>, thus requiring a high degree of communication and coordination between the various groups. Given the number of actors, as well as their differing interests, BTSA serves as an ideal platform for studying decision-making within a highly-politicized environment. Accordingly, this study examines how the variety of pressures that BTSA administrators are confronted with impact their decision-making. State legislators, cluster directors, district cabinet members, program coordinators and any other district BTSA administrators will be interviewed to get a deep understanding of the decisions that are being made within each district and the pressures that motivate administrators to make the different decisions. In this sense, the organizational structure of BTSA is also considered with this research design. Because BTSA is so complex and has such a wide variety of stakeholders, it is important to get the different views of the administrators that work with the program at various levels of the program.

Because the structure of BTSA is so complex, assessing the views of individual administrators within the program is important. BTSA, as a program, is formed through a series of relationships between individuals who are employed by different agencies. Understanding the decision-making process of individual BTSA administrators requires taking a narrow, but deep slice of the BTSA program. Interviews of California legislators and former state education officials associated with the formation of BTSA and SB 2042, cluster directors, district cabinet members and BTSA district coordinators allows a deeper understanding of the various factors that impact individual BTSA coordinators.

#### 3.2 Research Questions

There are four primary questions that this study examines. All of the questions are related to the decision-making practices that BTSA administrators are undertaking during a time of immense pressure. All of the questions also lead to gaining a fuller understanding of how each of these leaders are responding to pressures, including declining resources, and utilizing the best practices for preserving the integrity of the BTSA program:

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<sup>1</sup> The architects of the BTSA program also took into account the concerns of representatives of the California Teachers Association, and accordingly included provisions in the legislation acknowledging existing collective bargaining agreements.

- What pressures are facing BTSA administrators?
- How are declining resources and related pressures impacting decision-making by BTSA administrators?
- How do different interpretations of BTSA program goals impact the decision-making process when facing declining resources?
- How well does established cutback management research predict the decisions that BTSA administrators make and the outcomes that result from their decisions?

### 3.3 Conceptual Framework

Levine's work on cutback management provides a conceptual framework for this study. It helps in understanding why BTSA administrators make the decisions related to budgetary pressures that they do. It also anticipates the reactions that they see in response. Using Levine's views on how to approach declining resources, this study examines the decisions that BTSA administrators make in regard to declining resources in two ways. First, the work on cutback management indicates that managers of public sector entities may either try to resist organizational decline using a variety of tactics or attempt to smooth the decline by using another set of strategies. Identifying these strategies and ascertaining the results of these behaviors helps in identifying the strategies that are being used and their effectiveness.

Another way the cutback management research is used in this study as a conceptual framework is by examining how BTSA administrators identify and protect core elements of the program. When attempting to smooth organizational decline, managers will identify the core values of the program to protect. The review of the induction standards and SB 2042 legislation will also be used to assess the degree to which the administrators are able to protect the core elements of the program. Using this conceptual framework as a lens to understand the decisions that BTSA administrators are making, the overall strategy of BTSA administrators can be better understood and the type of strategy can be identified.

### 3.4 Research Questions

This study was conducted in four phases of problem-identification, literature review, interviews and analysis. The first phase involved a systematic review of the governing legislation, research on the history of the formation of BTSA, as well as a review of state induction standards, CTC guidelines and district program materials. Following the document analysis, a series of interviews with state legislators were conducted to fully understand the goals of BTSA's governing legislation and to gain further insight into the core values of BTSA. The second phase involved the development of a conceptual framework. By reading the research on cutback management, this framework was designed around predicting the behaviors of managers as they deal with organizational decline. The third phase consisted of interviews (two rounds) with state BTSA administrators and district BTSA administrators, conducted to review the various pressures that are being placed on BTSA administrators and what decisions they are making to protect the program. A second round of interviews was conducted to answer unresolved questions. All interviews were semi-structured and built on the document analysis from the first phase as well as the information gathered from previous interviews.

The fourth and final phase was the analysis and interpretation phase. In this phase, using a constructivist approach, I first engaged in a holistic reading of interview data and BTSA meeting observation notes and then conducted line-by-line analysis to code for specific types of pressures as they emerged from the observations and interviews. Once primary themes were identified, I organized interview and observation data by themes using analytic matrices.

The table below provides a general overview of the research methods. Following the tabular representation is a more detailed explanation of each subsection:

Table 1: Research Overview

A. Problem Identification/Background Knowledge	B. Wisdom of Practice, Theoretical Understandings & Frameworks	C. Two Rounds of Interviews with Informants	D. Analysis and Interpretation of Interview Results
1) Legislation: Teacher Credentialing (SB 2042, AB1266)	1) Teacher Retention Literature	1) Legislators	1) Review Interview Data Using Constructivist Approach
2) History and Goals of Legislation	2) Teacher Quality Literature	2) CTC Officials	2) Organize Interview Data Along Themes and Pressures
3) Documentation Review (CDE, CTC, LEAs)	3) Teacher Induction Literature	3) Authors of SB 2042	
4) CTC Survey Goals & Objections	4) Cutback Management Literature		

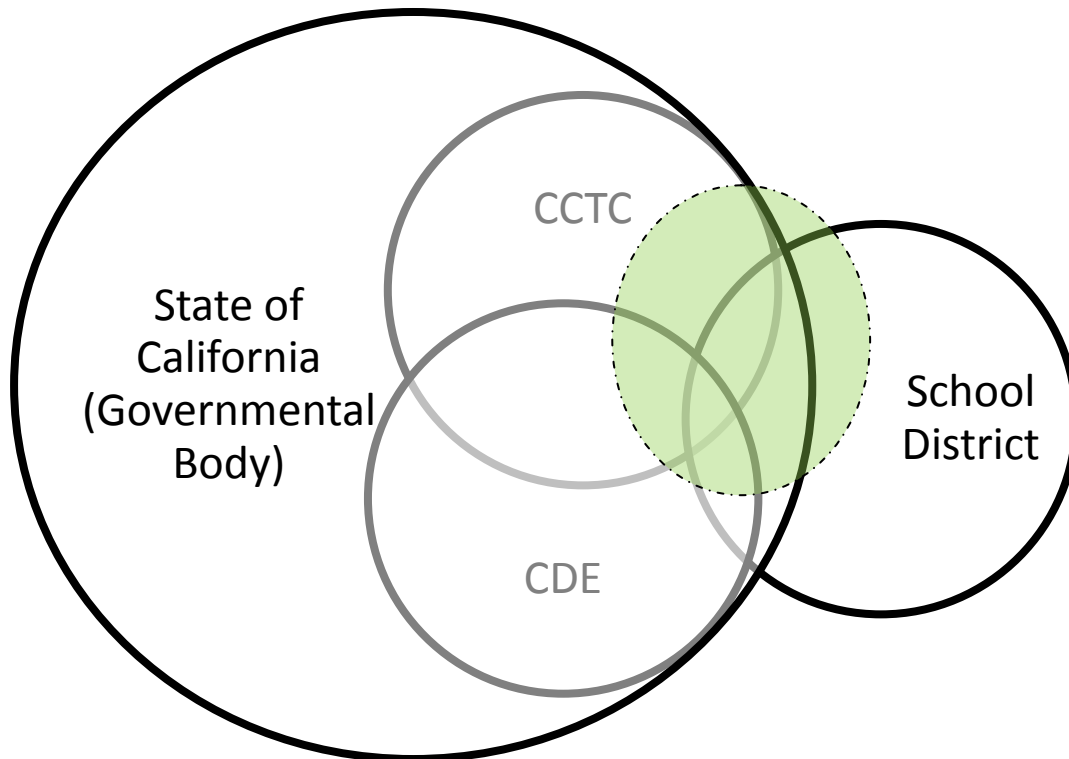
### 3.5 Research Setting

BTSA is defined by the intersecting relationships between the California Department of Education (CDE), The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and Local Education Agencies (usually school districts) providing BTSA services. Both the CDE and CTC are part of the governmental body of the state of California. All of these groups have different interests. This study and BTSA are defined by the area in which these groups overlap. The graphic below illustrates this point.

The area shaded in green represents this conceptual space where this study will be conducted. As the graphic illustrates, although each organization may be defined as a separate entity, this study examines a program that functions where the interests of different groups overlap. This becomes especially important during austere times when competing interests for resources place the interests of BTSA, in competition with other programs.



Figure 3: Research Setting



### 3.6 Analytical Plan

The analytical plan for this study consists of document analysis, interviews and interview data analysis. The study documents were submitted to content analyses in order to match goals, guidelines and intentions of the state for BTSA. The conceptual framework of cutback management was then applied to the interview results. The results of the content analyses of the legislation were used alongside the cutback management framework to identify areas where key elements of the program were identified and protected. In my theoretical framework to the information associated with this study, the analyses plan will also identify the influences that pressure agents to make the decisions that they do.

### 3.7 Document analysis

Sources for BTSA program information include the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and school district BTSA programs. Institutional evidence to be analyzed will include CCTC guidelines, handbooks and standards, as well as school district course and program outlines. These items will then be analyzed for alignment with the state BTSA standards and research-based best practices. Finally, the BTSA standards will be analyzed for alignment with the legislative goals of SB 2042.

Content analysis will focus on identifying documents which represent the goals, guidelines and intentions of the state for BTSA, as well as the LEA. Documents, such as state induction standards, program guidelines, memoranda, relevant legislation, course and program guidelines and other official documents, as well as district timelines, curriculum and program curriculum, will be gathered and reviewed in order to identify alignment of program goals and intentions with state requirements.

These items fall into three basic categories: state legislation, state guidelines and standards, and district program materials. The program materials will be compared to the original BTSA standards and legislation. The legislative goals identified from the document analysis of SB2042, as well as interviews with the authors of the legislation will be compared to the program materials and interview data for coherence. This information will be used to identify whether the core values that BTSA administrators emphasize match the program goals articulated by the governing legislation and induction standards.

### **3.8 Interviews**

Initial interviews were conducted with the state legislators who wrote the governing legislation for BTSA. These interviews have been used to understand the principals' intent when crafting the governing legislation. BTSA cluster directors, for each of the two California regions as well as school district BTSA administrators were interviewed. These interviews were analyzed using the codes extrapolated from the document analysis. Each district and state administrator was interviewed once in this initial phase. Interviews with state administrators were used to evaluate the different ways that BTSA administrators interpret the legislation and guidelines that govern BTSA, as represented by the BTSA standards and analysis of CCTC and district BTSA documents. Interviews were analyzed using an intelligent reading. A mixed system of selective and open-coding was utilized in order to identify new themes that might emerge from the initial interviews. An intelligent reading of the transcripts helped to uncover new themes and concepts that might arise from the initial interviews. Memos of new ideas were recorded on the margins of the transcripts and compared to transcripts of other interviews to identify recurring themes. Follow-up questions related to emergent themes were prepared for a second round of interviews. Additionally, verifying questions to better substantiate and clarify statements from initial interviews were prepared as a part of this second round of interviews.

An objective of the second set of interviews was to verify that data gathered from initial interviews were accurate. To accomplish this, follow-up questions asked to clarify initial responses in order to reduce the likelihood that my interpretation of the initial responses may have been inaccurate. The representativeness of statements by individuals were strengthened by asking related questions to other respondents in order to reduce the potential that responses from one individual may not be representative.

After the final set of interviews, the codes that emerged were used to identify the important systems, challenges and motivating factors that either encourage or undermine inter-organizational coherence between the CDE/CCTC and LEAs. The importance of these systems, challenges and factors were determined by reviewing the interviews, documents and legislation and identifying the areas where there is a lack of, or especially, strong coherence, then reviewing the interviews again to understand why these challenges or strengths have emerged.

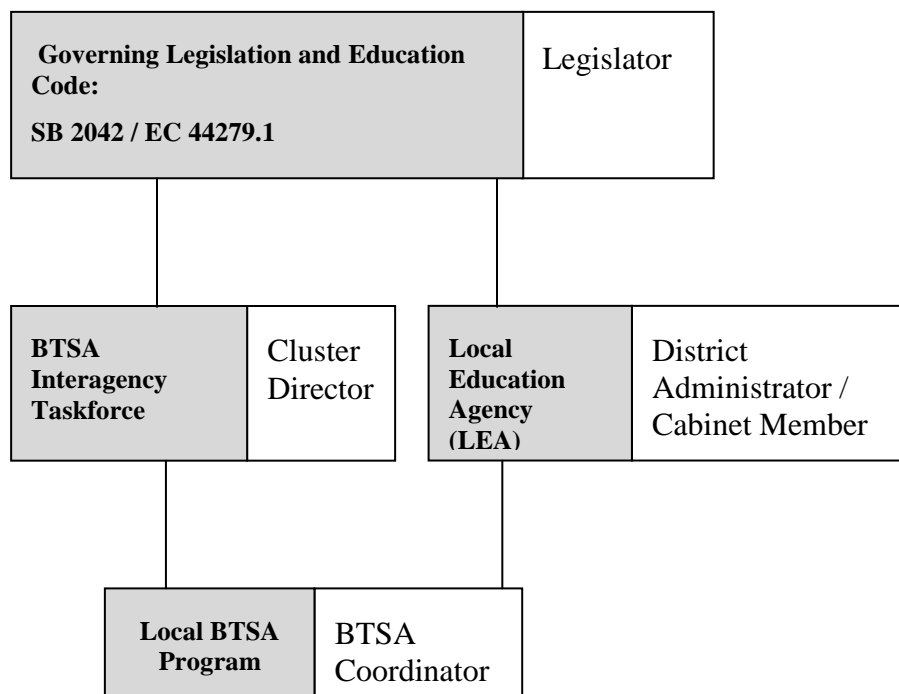
Transcripts from second interviews were analyzed using an “intelligent” or holistic reading initially. With this set of interviews, only selective coding was used. Intelligent reading of transcripts was done by analysis of paragraphs to determine the proper code for relevant comments. Memos of the codes were recorded on the margins of the transcripts and compared to transcripts of other interviews to identify recurring themes. Within each theme, codes for various factors were generated.

### 3.8.1 BTSA administrator interviews

These interviews were compared with legislation, induction standards and principal interviews and examined for deviation. As with interviews for principals, selective and open-coding were used. General preparations for the second round of interviews were the same as for principal interviews. With administrator interviews, I focused on understanding the problems that have emerged in BTSA. As practitioners, agents have a good understanding of these phenomena. One of the more pronounced problems recently has been cuts to BTSA programs as a result of budget cuts.

Below is a graphical representation of how interviews with representatives of the four elements of the BTSA program allowed this study to get a grasp of the deeper influences on the BTSA program. The shaded areas of each box represent the organizations that are being represented by the un-shaded area which denotes the individual that was interviewed to gain the perspective of that respective group.

Figure 4: Interview Structure



### 3.9 Limitations

There were certain limitations to this study due to the duration, the limited resources available to the researcher and the current conditions in the research setting. Sample size is among the specific limitations. Because the researcher was the sole data collector, and funding for this project was limited, it was not possible to interview individuals beyond the Northern California area. Further, this constraint limited the number of cluster leads available and thus the number of district BTSA coordinators. Although this study includes a wide variety of administrators within the BTSA program, such as legislators, cluster directors district administrators, including cabinet members, as well as BTSA program coordinators for two large urban schools districts in two different clusters, the sample size is small. The sample of California legislators involved with writing SB 2042 was small because only a few individuals were involved with the process. Further, because this study took place during a time of sizeable cutbacks to BTSA spending, the number of individuals involved in each program fell significantly. In both school districts, staffing was cut down from a department of four or five people, not including the part-time employees, to a single BTSA coordinator. This meant that there were not many administrators or other staff remaining in either program. In one of the two districts, the BTSA coordinator left prior to the conclusion of gathering data. With some research, I was able to locate her and conduct a final interview to complete the data gathering for that district. Unfortunately, because of the massive workload that was left in the wake of her departure, her immediate supervisor indicated that she did not have any time to participate in an interview. Additionally, because of the limited amount of time available to conduct this research, an extended longitudinal analysis of behaviors was not possible.

## Chapter 4

### Findings

#### 4.1 Introduction

California's budget challenges caused drastic changes to the way that BTSA is implemented. The impact of budget cuts and staffing cuts, lost collaboration time and varying levels of district support have put new pressures on BTSA administrators to make decisions regarding the best steps to keep programs operational. The large cuts to BTSA programs were not anticipated when the program was designed. This means that decisions regarding how to protect the integrity of BTSA programs were left largely to district program administrators without any guidance from official BTSA literature or the state department of education.

When the state moved the BTSA Block Grant and Peer Assistance and Review funding to Tier III status, it permitted districts to use these categorical funding sources to compensate for cuts to the general fund. The change allowed districts to use these funds to support other district programs, which then resulted in large cuts to BTSA staffing, as well as other program resources. The austere budget environment also altered the way that BTSA programs are viewed by districts. Because Tier III categorical funds can be used to support general programs, BTSA programs had to compete with other programs for the funding that districts received under the BTSA Block Grant.

In both districts that were studied, the question of how to cut spending within BTSA programs while maintaining the program's integrity remained. Further, there was an understanding that a large amount of the block grant funds would be used to support the general fund. This created pressure on BTSA administrators to smooth organizational decline in the manner that Levine advocated. Conversely, unfunded mandates, such as the accreditation process and requirements that were monitored by cluster directors created pressure to implement the program to fidelity with the California induction standards and SB 2042.

In making these decisions, BTSA administrators shared some of the strategies that they employed to keep programs operational and effective. A priority for administrators was to keep cuts as far away from participating teachers as possible. This strategy is consistent with the research on cutback management (Levine 1978, Levine 1979). Additionally, program coordinators defined the most central program goals that they will focus on as cuts are made (Mueller et al, 2001). This created a third pressure on administrators to identify the key areas to protect, identify areas in which they would accept cuts and to compromise.

Overall, the pressures that faced BTSA administrators came from three directions:

- Pressure to implement cuts (smooth organizational decline),
- Pressure to resist cuts (implement program fully) and

- Pressure to compromise (identify key elements of the program and protect them).

#### **4.2 Pressure to implement cuts: Impact of budget cuts on decision-making**

Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, much of the funding that was used by local education agencies (LEAs) was categorized by the state legislature as Tier III funds. This categorization allowed the LEA to use the funds however they chose. In previous years, restrictions on these categorically-funded items would have mandated that school districts spend all of the BTSA block grant dollars intended for BTSA on the BTSA program itself. Because many school districts are facing severe budgetary challenges, much of the Tier III funds were re-allocated to other areas of need. In the two districts that I studied, BTSA coordinators indicated that large portions of their budgets were “swept,” or moved into the general fund. The reduction in funding available for BTSA programs had an impact on the decision-making process for BTSA administrators. Participating administrators indicated that they felt that once the district had the opportunity to use the money how it wanted, the district chose to take the money for its general fund. This meant that only a small share was left with the BTSA programs. One district level administrator, who I will call Jessie, expressed this idea below.

...the money went into Tier III flexibility... rather than being protected as a block grant for BTSA for the purpose for which it was being, um, generated. The state said that districts could...that they would just put the money so the money was still basically there. It was cut 20% or 15% , the overall funding and then it was handed to the district , so then the districts could do whatever they wanted with it and I know that most districts, basically, you know, took the money. (Jessie, 121610, 171-177)

In deeper conversations, Jessie indicated that over 80% of the funds had been swept into the general fund, which had a tremendous impact on her program. As a result of the Tier III funds being swept, BTSA administrators made deep cuts to their programs during the 2009-2010 school year. During this period of time, BTSA program coordinators and cluster directors focused on the items that they saw as least central to their programs. They began with eliminating auxiliary costs that were associated with venues, food, travel and other non-essential items. One of the cluster directors explained that these types of cuts did not seem to have much of an impact on the program itself, but added work to completing tasks. One cluster director, who I am referring to as Sullivan, felt that these changes had an impact on superficial elements of the program, but did not affect the way that the cluster operated in a major way.

Yeah, I mean it's probably not as noticeable, I mean, for example we are not using hotels for venues anymore for our meetings. We're trying to find, like we'll sit in a county office, or we're using a district workshop room or something like that. We used to be able to...because we work with directors from throughout the cluster, which goes all the way into Los Angeles, we wanted it to be a nice situation for them, if they fly up and come in for a two day meeting, or something so we would have had a hotel and we had food from the hotel. And we're not doing that. We're doing that in different venues that are less

costly, or free. And they're not getting as much food for example. (Sullivan, 013111, 157-167)

Sullivan felt that while these types of expenses were nice to be able to provide to the participants, they were not essential items. He continued by sharing some of the other areas where costs were saved, including travel. Travel expenses did not seem to be a core element of the program, but the idea of communication is an important theme that reoccurs in the induction standards, and is also highlighted with the two large studies of BTSA, which determined that communication is a core element of BTSA's success (Mitchell, 2007, Tushnet, 2002). While communication was still happening with the cuts to travel expenses, it was less personal. Meetings which used to rotate throughout the state were centralized in Sacramento, other face-to-face meetings were replaced with telephone calls and "phone conferences."

Those kinds of things. In terms of the kind of everyday support that's happening, I'm not able to do as many programs as it's just more phone calls now. So I can't go out and meet personally with people as readily as I did before. The work is getting done, but it's more challenging. (Sullivan, 013111, 167-170)

Sullivan explained that the impact of this change, while somewhat minimal, was that the state taskforce was no longer going out to the different clusters and regions of California. Although this was not a core element of BTSA, one of the recommendations of the Riverside study was that the state directors develop better lines of communication with the districts. The Riverside study also recommended that the BTSA program emphasize the community element of the program. Sullivan articulated this change and its impact on the way that meetings occur now. He pointed out that the new system meant that all meetings occurred in Sacramento, whereas the location used to rotate throughout the different regions of California.

What I'm noticing at the taskforce level is positions at CDE taskforce as you know is representatives for CDE and senators from the CTC. CDE has some reorganization in the past, so the people who are on the taskforce have had to reprioritize their own responsibilities. I think probably the most direct fallout would be the lack of ability to travel. So for example we would hold a cluster, or a state leadership team meeting in San Diego or something, and we would alternate North-South, so that it would be fair for CRD's who are down south. We're not doing that now. Everything's happening in Sacramento because these folks at the CDE and the CTC are not traveling.. so it's those kinds of changes in terms of the amount of time they are able to devote. (Sullivan, 013111, 208-218)

BTSA administrators responded to these cuts by making decisions to cut as far from the program's underlying core structure as possible. As the budget cuts became deeper, the elements

of the program that were lost came increasingly close to the core structure of the program. Alice, another program coordinator, used the analogy of spending cuts as cuts to the body of the BTSA program. She characterized these initial cuts as cuts to the skin or flesh. They did not affect the integrity of the overall programs. More problematic cuts began to emerge as the funding situation worsened and she was faced with the challenge of cutting more central elements.

Within the reality in which I find myself, the conversation that we were having earlier about how it's sometimes good to pare down. And then there are some times you cut down skin, then you start cutting into the meat, but you don't want to get down to the bone where it really, where the nerves are where it really hurts. That's where we are now in our program. We've cut skin and we've drawn blood and now it's a matter of putting a Band-Aid on that and not cutting further than we have to. (Alice, 121610, 25-31)

As the funding levels for school districts continued to decline, the cuts that could be made to what Alice called the *skin* and *meat* of the body of BTSA had already been made. During the 2010-2011 year, further cuts were made resulting in new pressures to make cuts that impacted the program in a more direct way. Among the cuts that were made, three areas stood out as the most central area. One was the loss of staff and its impact on the ability of program coordinators to do their jobs. This challenge became increasingly pronounced as many programs entered the accreditation cycle. A second significant area was the impact that cuts had on the ability of program coordinators and BTSA participants and support providers to collaborate and meet on a regular basis. A third area of concern was the loss of funds to pay support providers, consultants and others who are involved in the implementation of BTSA.

### **4.3 The Impact of BTSA staffing cuts**

The loss of staff placed a strain on BTSA administrators. Because they were asked to do more with fewer dollars, the importance of BTSA administrators being able to work efficiently in implementing the various aspects of their respective programs was heightened. Losing clerical staff, however, made administrators less efficient, wiping away some of the perceived savings of eliminating clerical positions. Because BTSA was still housed within LEAs, the programs were still required to operate within the bureaucracy of the school district much the same as other district departments. Clerical tasks such as creating purchase orders, purchase requisitions, time cards, and absence sheets, maintaining meeting records and a host of others still needed to be completed. Because both programs in the districts that I studied lost their clerical staff, the program coordinators were forced to spend much of their work day completing clerical tasks. This was inefficient, not only because BTSA administrators are paid at a higher rate than clerical staff, thus cost more per hour to do the same work, but also because BTSA coordinators are not as familiar with how to do the work. They are less efficient and not as good at it.

When Alice was asked about which of the BTSA staff was most missed when the various positions were eliminated, she indicated that the loss of clerical staff had the greatest impact on the program. Alice shared that the problem with losing the clerical staff was two-fold. First, Alice was forced to complete all of the clerical tasks that the clerical staff once performed, in



addition to the many new roles that she was taking on as a result of the budget cuts. Second, she was not trained to do any of the new clerical work.

You can imagine me trying to field phone calls, take care of the day-to-day work and then manage the database on top of that? That alone, being able to be first point of contact for participants, managing them day-to-days, and all of our stuff with Power School (student information system) and Bi-Tech (online purchase order system) – She knows those systems, she knows what she’s doing with them. Whereas me, my learning curve is so high and what time do I have to actually have to pay attention to learning how to use PowerSchool or learning how to use Bi-tech? I don’t have time to soak up too many of the things pulling at me... We’re a large, poor, urban school district who are always going to have, if history repeats itself, we’re always going to have a large contingency of teachers coming through our program. People don’t seem to understand it. It doesn’t matter if there are 250 or 111 teachers who come through our program, the structure of the program still has to be maintained. All the work still has to be done. (Alice, 012011, 110-123)

A second significant point that Alice highlighted was the loss of a collaborative partner. Clerks served to complete clerical tasks and were also often used as colleagues with whom program coordinators could share ideas and seek advice. Alice also added that the clerical position was responsible for being the initial point of contact for many of the participating teachers who might have basic questions regarding the program. Having this position in place provides relief for Alice and adds to the efficiency of the program overall. It further reinforces the theme of collaboration that the program induction standards and the Riverside study highlight (California, 2008, Mitchell, 2007).

When I had more staff, the primary person that if, tomorrow, if she could walk back in here my world would be 50-75% better than it is right now is an administrative assistant, the secretary. Because the person who has been with our program for the last five or six years knows this program forward and backward. She knows this program. She is my first point of contact for all of my participants. So she’s so good at what she does that she can answer questions or get people through situations. Then she knows enough to know, OK, I don’t know enough about this, let me forward you to [Alice] so she can take care of this. I’ll forward this email to her, I’ll let her know what’s going on so she and I can talk about what happened, what did the person tell you. So now I have a person to collaborate with but now I have time to think about it, like what’s going on with this teacher, how do I want to approach that. (Alice, 012011, 91-110)

The loss of clerical staff left Alice with less time to construct ways to keep the program operational and efficient. Instead of thinking of ways to save money for the BTSA program and over 200 participants, much of Alice’s time was spent entering data into a database. In both districts that were studied, other staff members were also cut. This left the BTSA departments much smaller and the remaining staff was left with much more work to do.

Um, well, this program was cut dramatically. I’m the only person left... (cutting the other BTSA staff) made my life really hard. Just from a selfish viewpoint but it’s also,

obviously, has compromised the quality of the program which is a big concern, there is just a lot less attention I can give to the participants and to the coaches...(Jessie, 120610, 62-70)

Jessie explained the consequences of continuing to scale back and the impact that it had on the attention that she can give the participating teachers. The volume of participating teachers she is serving creates a logistical problem for the program. The communication and attention that she could previously give was spread thin by the loss of clerical staff and the attention that she had to give to clerical duties. Further, the structure that was used to interact with participating teachers was impacted as PT liaisons were reduced. Liaisons once helped to deal with some of the logistical challenges of meeting with large numbers of participating teachers within the program. The liaisons were used by the program coordinators to ensure that participating teachers had sufficient one-to-one contact. Once these positions were cut, the ability of program coordinators to monitor participating teacher progress and to provide participating teachers with individual feedback was reduced significantly.

...the way that we had the program structured was that there were smaller clusters 'cause this is a gigantic program. There's 275 participating teachers this year and 150 coaches. Last year there were more. Um, but then still a lot of people and they're spread out across about 100 schools. So it's just impossible to give people the kind of personal attention that we were able to give them before and then showing up in ways like because we had liaisons who were assigned to smaller...that was broken out. So that each of the liaisons had a group of, maybe, 30 or 40 people. So that they could communicate regularly with those 30 or 40 people. Do outreach, you know, contact the coaches and make sure that they attended trainings and make sure they were keeping their skills up and they were designing on-going, um, support and professional learning communities. (Jessie, 121610, 74-86)

Another issue that emerged from the interview data was the reduction in the level of compensation for support providers. This relates to Levine's concept of "exploiting the exploitable." During the austere times, some individuals find themselves in positions where they may have no choice but to continue to do work despite severe cuts in compensation. This scenario did have some differences, however, as most of the support providers were concurrently employed as teachers. Others were retirees with benefits. Nearly all support providers did not depend on the support provider stipend for income. According to Jessie, these individuals continued to support the program because of the relationships that have been built over a period time with others within the program. Jessie also highlighted the weaknesses in this practice. Because a program cannot depend totally on good will, some of the coaches began to leave the program. Further, because she was spread thin, she had a reduced capacity to recruit new coaches who would take the place of the ones who were leaving.

So that's all gone, you know, and I'm seeing that just getting the new coaches to come basic training has been a real struggle cause I just don't have the outreach capacity, um, we had to cut their stipends and I think that is a disincentive... So on top of cutting the

staff we've also cut the level of stipends, um, you know, so I can see already that people's skills are going to be falling off and I'm not sure what's going on out in the field. I can't keep up with all those people, you know, I can send out emails and ask people to report back to me? ... You know, I can run around and talk with as many people as I possibly can but that still is, you know, there's a big difference between taking responsibility for training and supporting 30 or 40 people as opposed to doing all the program administration and trying to support, um, 400 people. (Jessie, 121610, 86-103)

Jessie's points are important when looking back to the central question regarding cuts that Alice made. How can cuts be made in a way that avoids cutting into the *bones* or underlying structure of the BTSA program? Both Alice and Jessie responded to the loss of their staff by attempting to do the work themselves. While it appeared that Alice was willing to work whatever additional hours are necessary to get the job done, it appeared that Jessie was less willing. She no longer felt that she had adequate oversight of what was happening in her program. The loss of staff went beyond causing more work for them. The loss of staff began to impact the quality of the program itself. There were aspects of the program that could not be properly monitored by a single person.

In addition to the issues of losing clerical staff and many of the other problems that emerged due to losing staff, Alice indicated that there were other effects of the reduction in staffing. Prior to the cuts, there was more specialization in the BTSA program. Following the cuts, BTSA coordinators were asked to play multiple roles for the program. Some of this change was positive, in that some systems of redundancy were not deemed effective. Some other roles seem to have played a critical part in operating a successful program. Further, some systems of redundancy were important. Redundancy protected the program from catastrophic decline if one of the staff members left. The previous model for the BTSA program within Alice's district included teacher liaisons that supported the program by providing some of the services that program coordinators provided. The system of redundancy helped to ensure that service was provided evenly throughout the program and that ongoing professional development occurred when needed.

They did a lot of one-on-one work with teachers and with support provider pairs. We had one teacher who worked with a particular high school because there were so many teachers, so many BTSA teachers at that high school, so she took that high school as her PT if you will. She really worked with all the participating teachers and the support providers at that school to really beef up and get the administration to understand that we can't not have support providers. We have got to get people to step up because we're going to have new teachers every year. Just look at the history again. Also they did PD for us. When we were able to offer additional professional development that teachers requested particularly around classroom management. (Alice, 012011, 132-144)

Although there was a high degree of specialization in the program with individuals who filled certain positions, she also noted that there were other positions that were capable of "wearing more than one hat." Alice highlighted one thing that her group did that proved to be very helpful to the cuts that eventually needed to be made. Although there were a variety of people in her organization who played a variety of roles, there were systems of redundancy built

into the organization; the group was “well-rounded.” Every person had some experience, although it may have been limited experience in performing most of the task that the organization needed to carry out. Although the more specialized staff members may have had less experience, both she and her co-coordinator played multiple roles.

But the thing about it was that there was this flexibility that if there was a large group of people who wanted to come to a workshop, one of the managers would step in and say ‘OK I’m going to support this professional development so we can offer this to as many teachers as possible. We were just much more well-rounded. At one time we also had portfolio readers, so there was more than just two people reading the binders. I will say I wouldn’t want that back. I would not want the structure the way it was then. I don’t think it was very effective. We tried it because what we were trying to do was build capacity so that two people weren’t holding all the knowledge about how the binders were assessed. It didn’t work very well, to put it that way so I wouldn’t want that structure back, in my perfect world. There wasn’t one person who’s trying to wear five or six different hats. (Alice, 012011, 146-157)

It is interesting to note that although Alice lamented the loss of more specialized roles and the ability to have individuals who focused on professional development or a coordinator who might have taken the lead on a particular school and treat it as their PT (participating teacher); she also highlighted some of the efficiency that was gained by eliminating some staff. For example, the structure having multiple readers of each portfolio was neither efficient nor desirable for her.

When asked about the impact that staffing cuts have had on Alice’s ability to give individualized support and attention to participating teachers, something that she considered a core element of the program, she expressed serious concerns. Alice said her decisions were focused on providing the core mentoring and, support and reflection for her PTs. Because she was the only person in the office, this limited her ability to complete the administrative tasks that were a necessary part of the program and to uphold what she saw as the core structure of BTSA.

I can’t do it. I don’t have time to do it. I’m pretty well chained to this seat, because when I leave there’s nobody in the office, no one to field phone calls. There’s no one here maintaining the office. So I just get really lucky or just decide, ‘I’m going, I don’t care.’ Particularly when I have a teacher who really needs that one on one kind of attention that we in the past have been able to give participating teachers and their support providers. It’s had a huge impact on that and that’s one of the things that we’re going to look at... at this upcoming binder review, because I’ve seen people, I’ve emailed people, but to actually have sat down and had meaningful conversations and try to understand what’s going on in their classroom and the challenges that they’re facing. I’ve had that conversation with far too few people this year. (Alice, 012011, 165-177)

Alice indicated that the reduction of clerical staff impeded her ability to perform more critical tasks. More of her time was spent completing clerical tasks. As the cuts to clerical

staffing happened, there was another unanticipated effect on the Alice's ability to collaborate. Alice returned to a theme that was brought up previously when Sullivan spoke about the effects of reducing the travel budget. An unintended consequence of the cut was reduction in the ability of the cluster directors to develop a sense of community as recommended by the Riverside study (Mitchell, 2007) and a reduced ability to collaborate as the California program induction standards mandate (California, 2008). Beyond the ability to collaborate was a more essential challenge that Alice faced: challenges in supervising the core elements of the program. Because she had to rely increasingly on email and telephone conversations, Alice became less able to observe programs and monitor their effectiveness. She also had problems with finding the time to visit sites.

And to be able to intervene, you know, to stop if something's happening, to come in and be able to say 'Alright, let's find out what's going on here and how can we stop this or what can we do to steer this situation in a different direction. But because I can't hear, because I'm not there to listen, I don't know about a lot of things that are happening out at the schools, unless I get lucky and talk to somebody and they sort of let it slip out and then I think 'ok how can I get in to talk to these people.' And it's just impossible. There just aren't enough hours in a day. (Alice, 012011, 177-184)

The reduction in staffing began to have a direct impact on the program's ability to serve PTs. Confronted with fewer spaces to cut that are "skin" or "meat," Alice became increasingly pressured to make decisions in terms of program enrollment. Sullivan explained that the new funding system designed by the state has frozen funding to the 2007-2008 levels. This meant that although a program might receive more or fewer teachers in a given year, they would still receive funding at the 2007-2008 levels. Because funding cuts in both districts caused high rates of teacher turnover, the number of perspective BTSA participants increased in both programs. Because of limited capacity, however, Alice explained that she was forced to limit enrollment in her program. Interviews with both authors of SB 2042, Mazzoni and Alpert, confirmed in their interviews that the original goal of the program was to maximize the retention of quality teachers. This runs counter to the idea of limiting the enrollment in a BTSA program. Nonetheless, Alice was limited by the resources available to her and focused on maintaining the elements of the program that maintain its integrity for the participants. Alice's response to this cut was consistent with the predictions of cutback management in identifying the core elements of the program.

Unfortunately I've had to limit enrollment because I only have that small training room next door and I can't you know have more people then can fit into the room to come. I'm still holding required meetings for the foundational pieces of the inquiry. So I don't want to leave teachers to sort of trying to figure it out. If I can give them the foundational pieces and then rely on my support providers to take the ball and run with it after we've given them the foundational pieces that we think they need in order to be able to conduct their inquiry well then you know, hopefully, we're still holding onto the integrity of the program. (Alice, 121610, 115-124)

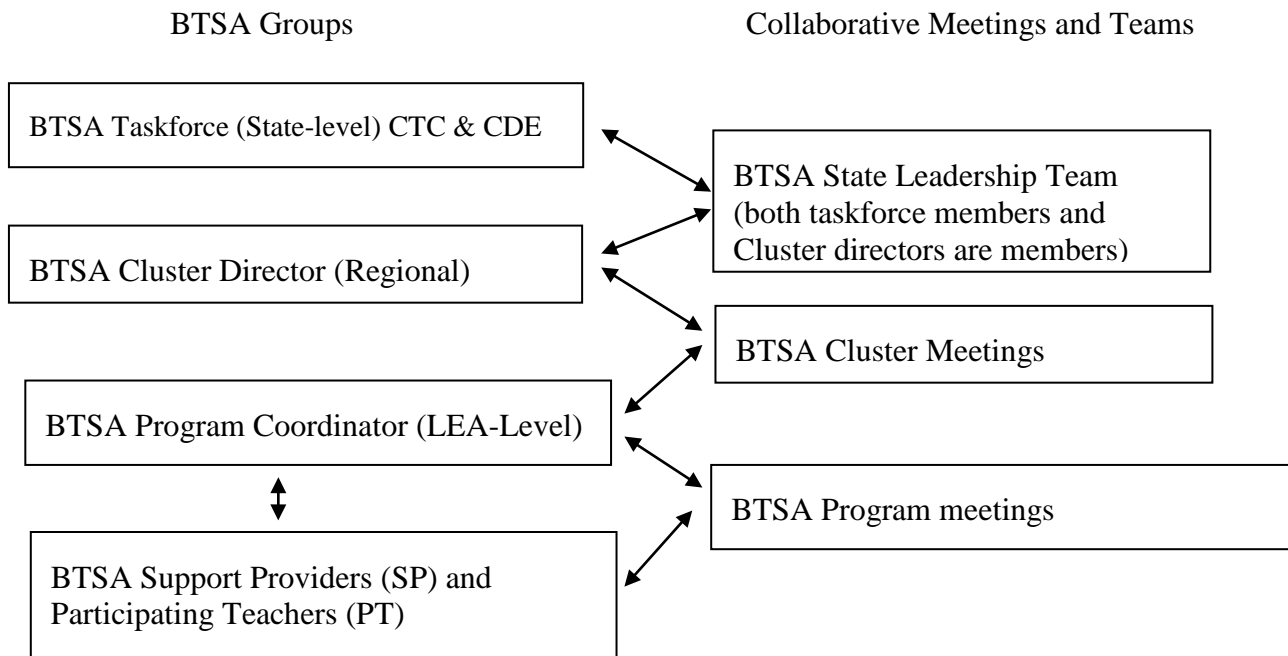
#### 4.4 The importance of collaboration to the BTSA model

BTSA is a complex intervention with a structure that depends on collaboration. Communication and collaboration are core elements of the BTSA program and are specified as program requirements under California Induction Program Standard 2. The fact that a variety of different agencies are involved in the implementation of the program means that communication and collaboration is essential to the program's success. The program was designed using a collaborative model and relies on collaboration to run effectively. On a structural level, even the design of the program depends on this. One of the authors of Senate Bill 2042, the legislation that governs BTSA, spoke to this issue by stating the important role that collaboration played in the formation of BTSA.

(We) wanted there to be a strong role for (all parties), basically, in this partnership so that it was a partnership where there was the ability to have professional oversight, peer oversight, yes and I think one of the things important to remember is that the BTSA programs around the state are not all the same so they were local, designed to meet local or regional needs by the people that were going to be implementing it and some have been more successful than others... It has to be collaborative because of the way education is governed in California so you can't leave out one of the key players. You have to have the training institutions, you have to at least have the training institutions, the Department of Education and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing involved. (Mazzoni, 111109, 171-184)

The collaborative structure that the legislature used in forming BTSA also followed in the structure that was created to implement BTSA. The BTSA program is made up of several different components, all of which are designed to share information across the various elements of BTSA. At the most senior level is the BTSA taskforce. This group is made up of members from the California Department of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Beneath the taskforce are the various BTSA clusters. These clusters make up the various regions of California. Each cluster is led by a cluster director. The cluster director also meets six times per year with the taskforce to share information from his or her cluster. This group of cluster directors and taskforce members is referred to as the state leadership team. Within each cluster are various BTSA programs. Each cluster has regular meetings during which information is shared from cluster directors who pass information and direction down from the state leadership team. Also, the cluster directors take information from the various program coordinators in their cluster and share that information with the taskforce state leadership team. Below is a visual representation of the various components of BTSA and how information flows between them. I have organized the diagram below into two columns. The column on the left is comprised of the different groups who make up the organization of BTSA. The column on the right is made up of the different formal meetings and teams that are used to relay information throughout the BTSA system. Please note that the state leadership team is both a group and a type of meeting. I have placed that group in the right column to emphasize its importance in facilitating communication between cluster directors and the BTSA taskforce.

Figure 5: BTSA Collaboration Structure



As the diagram above illustrates, there are a variety of formal structures that have been built into the BTSA model to ensure that collaboration takes place on an ongoing basis. This is important to remember especially within the context of previous studies that have been done on BTSA. Perhaps the largest study to have been conducted to date, by the WestEd group, concluded that, at the time, the flow of information was not free enough between the CTC and CDE, especially with teacher demographic information (Tushnet, et al, 2003). According to one of the cluster directors, new legislation has been passed since that time to address this challenge. Sullivan, another cluster director also indicated that it is by using a collaborative model that the cluster directors were able to ensure that the necessary information is shared throughout the system.

#### **4.5 The impact of losing collaboration time**

The collaborative structure of BTSA helps the program to share information between the numerous organizations that are involved with the implementation of the program. At the cluster meetings, typically vital information on how to improve the performance of BTSA and new information coming from the two state agencies (CTC & CDE) are shared. Additionally, program coordinators often use the meetings as a forum to share best practices. Jessie said that the cluster meetings helped the BTSA organization function as a professional learning community. It provided her with a forum to find solutions and innovative approaches to challenges.

Because you'd get ideas and innovations from your colleagues it was more of like a professional learning community. We had some breakout sessions where people would talk about, you know, some of the innovations and some ways that they were addressing the program elements and there was time to really chew on that And get some really good ideas to bring back. So there was, you know, it was just really helpful to share with your colleagues and find out how different people were coming up with different solutions (Jessie, 120610, 290-297)

Alice also indicated that this benefitted her because she was able to share what she was doing in her program and get fresh ideas from other programs on how to address her PTs' needs. Because the cuts have been so severe, however, she has indicated that the cluster meetings became more of a "support group."

We have local directors collaborative and we try to meet on a regular basis to just support one another, talk about what happened at the different cluster meetings because some of our directors in this area are in cluster 2 and others are in cluster 1. So we try to meet together to put our heads together, what'd you hear, what'd you hear, what are you guys doing.' But also the main thing we try to do is support one another through whatever it is that we're doing at a particular time in the year. Those meetings have now sort of... to be honest, they've turned more into a support group because everybody has so much stuff on their plate. (Alice, 012011, 190-201)

The reduction in the amount of collaboration has altered the work that is done within the collaborative meetings, as Alice highlights. While the support that program coordinators gave to each other seems to be a very important mechanism in ensuring that programs are sustained, some of the work that had been done previously in the collaborative meetings was lost. Much of the creativity and sharing-of-ideas that Sullivan and Alice highlighted as being essential to the program, were replaced with support.

There are a number of programs like ours that have one person running the program and so they don't have anybody with whom to collaborate so when we come together, it's just 'I'm so lonely, I just want to see people.' Because it's more of the support group rather than collaboration and trying to be creative in our thinking and sharing ideas about what we're doing with our teachers and what's worked for us and what hasn't worked for us. It's become much more emotional support because of the impact that a lot of decisions that districts have made have had on the program. (Alice, 012011, 201-208)

Additional pressure was placed on program coordinators to do more of the tasks that were required of them with increasingly limited resources. In order to accomplish this, they had to be more efficient. Both program coordinators expressed concern that elements of the program that were designed to create a more effective and efficient system were being undermined. The stress that was placed on the system created a stressful environment that required a space for support and to share the strategies that were most effective in adjusting to the declining resources that



were available. While Alice lamented the loss of some of the effectiveness of the cluster meetings in sharing strategies, it is clear that she, like Jessie, relied on the support of her peers to be an effective leader. While both coordinators mentioned the cluster meetings as a space that they used for support and to collaborate with other leads, they also mentioned others that they relied upon for support. Both Jessie and Alice indicated that there are other district administrators to whom they could turn for support.

But the person who is now in charge of our department has, um, has said that they feel some of the cuts were irresponsible. So that was, you know, at least there's some acknowledgement from some upper level and then but then nothing actually being, you know, and then actually, in all fairness, that person did find some...reallocate some money to, um, to increase the stipends for the mentors. They said, "well what can we do now?" And I, you know, and I said well I think that uh, you know, the first thing would be to at least increase the stipend amount to the minimum level. It was cut below our minimum level. So, I said let's at least restore the stipend amount for all of those 150 mentors to where, to the base level. So she agreed to do that. (Jessie, 120610, 236-246)

The point that Jessie made here is an interesting one. While she indicated in previous interviews that the previous district administrator did not support the program, it seems that she felt that she had an ally in the new administration. Upon closer reading, however, it also seems that some of the support that Jessie saw may be the result of the involvement of the cluster director. Following the initial steps that the new administration took to pull back from some of the deepest cuts to the program, Jessie's cluster director visited the district and advocated for spending to be increased. This role mirrored the resistance to cuts that Hayden demonstrated with the school board. Similarly, the BTSA program benefitted as some of the cuts were not made. It is important to recall the travel expenses issues that Sullivan raised earlier. It is unclear if the district would have agreed to return funding to the BTSA program, as they did in this case had the cluster directors not made a personal visit to Jessie's district.

And then the, um, cluster regional directors came out to do a visit. They do like interim visits, informal, you know, just to, like, check in, and I invited my supervisors to that meeting and they were helpful, those cluster directors were helpful in reiterating that the program needed support, and, you know, that the way it was being run right now was a disservice So after that, my supervisor agreed to, at least, um, provide another position for an administrative assistant to help with some of the administrative tasks. So, theoretically, that position is going to be posted in the next week or two. So there's been a little bit of movement and it's, you know, and it's been with, you know, again some of the support of the cluster directors to, you know, to kinda lean on them, you know, it's a struggle (Jessie, 121610, 236-258)

Alice also indicated that the new associate superintendent was an ally and useful in finding support for her program. Although some persuasion was needed to encourage Jessie's district administrator to change her perspective, Alice was glowing in her account of the support that she has seen from her district administrator.

She understands what I need, but where does she go to get me what I need, I'm not sure about that yet. It's a new relationship. But I'm encouraged by it. I've met with her already three times. She came to our initial meeting for accreditation. I did not expect that the assistant superintendent would show up for this meeting. I called her secretary and said 'who's the designee and she said well I'll ask her and she said no she's coming. Are you kidding me? This is fantastic. (Alice, 121610, 322-329)

#### **4.6 Pressure to implement program to fidelity: Accreditation**

Another pressure that BTSA administrators were facing was the task of preparing their respective programs for the accreditation process. Although BTSA administrators understood the necessity of this process, completing the accreditation process was not seen as a core element of the program. Instead the process is seen as a distraction by program coordinators. The pressure of the accreditation process is linked to the expectation that the full BTSA program is implemented fully and is in accord with the California induction standards. Among the things that the visiting committee will evaluate is whether all of the program standards have been implemented.

The loss of office staff contributes to this dilemma as the support that would help with gathering documentation and preparing for an accreditation visit decreased or was taken away. Conversely, cluster directors saw the need for programs to be prepared for accreditation visits as a central focus for programs at the current time.

Alice's perspective on WASC accreditation was that it was an additional task to be completed with fewer resources. In addition to the cuts that she has seen, the task of seeing her program through accreditation was drawing her further away from the central task of the program. She also referred to the process as "university accreditation" on more than one occasion. This related back to her impression that the accreditation process relates less to the central task of mentoring and supporting teachers and related more to other issues, such as bureaucracy and competition with university-run BTSA programs.

we are, lucky us, in the orange cohort for accreditation. Which means that we are among the first bit to induction programs that will go through the university accreditation process. What that means is that aside from everything we're having to deal with as far as the tier 3 funding and cuts in staff and cuts in resources and cuts, cuts, cuts we're also having to deal with preparation for a site visit that will happen in April. (Alice ,121610, 33-37)

Alice also added that the impact of having to go through the accreditation process was compounded by the loss of her clerical support staff. She further highlighted that the process that should have been a reflective experience and an opportunity for her to improve the program through reviewing its elements, became a bureaucratic process in which she was more focused on compliance issues. Again, Alice returned to the perspective that she repeated throughout many of her interviews. She stated that the most important thing for her to do was to focus on the core elements of the program and to maintain its integrity.

The accreditation process is similar to WASC review. So you can imagine what's that like to have one person, that would be me, trying to prepare for an accreditation visit. It's crazy. While I know that that has to be my focus because I do want my program to be seen in a positive light, I think that we run an excellent program and I would like the reviewers to see that. I've sort of made a decision that I'm not going to allow what I consider an untimely, unnecessary bureaucratic decision that's been made by a governor who's on his way out. I'm not going to let that pull me completely away from my focus which is on my participants, particularly on my participating teachers. My focus this year is to try as best I can to not let the pain trickle down or spread out to my participating teachers. (Alice, 121610, 37-49)

Alice continued to share her frustration with the accreditation process by highlighting the perception that the process is understandable, but drew her away from her focus. She also expressed frustration that because she did not have sufficient resources to prepare for the review, the program will not be seen for all of the good work that it performs. This again tied back in with the previous statements that were made regarding the need to have clerical and other support staff within the program.

Well, I don't think the requirements of the accreditation support my goals but I understand why we have to do it. I get it, that we've taken a big old chunk out of the university's world by being a school district that runs a program that allows teachers to use the work that they do in their classrooms to clear their credentials, instead of having to get in the car, drive to the site, sit in a classroom, blah blah blah. We've taken that from them and so there's accountability factor that says ok, so you guys say you're doing it. Let's see that you're doing it. I get that. It's just that it's happening at a time that's so hard. I don't think that the accreditation team. I know the accreditation team is not going to see my program at its best. I know the program would be seen in its underwear. We won't be dressed up looking pretty and having our hair done and everything. We're going to be trying to hold onto a t-shirt and a pair of jeans maybe but we will not be dressed for the occasion... (Alice, 121610, 212-225)

#### **4.7 Supporting BTSA administrators and support providers**

Professional relationships play an important role within the BTSA program. Some of these relationships are critical because of the design of the program. It is clearly important, for example, that support providers and participating teachers have a good relationship so that the coaching and mentoring element is effective. It is important that relationships be developed so that PTs feel comfortable reflecting on their practice.

The impact of mentorship on shaping the craft of teachers is one of the core tenets of BTSA. Support providers are asked to help guide new teachers through the initial years in the

profession so that they can develop into strong teachers. In an interview with Jessie, she relayed the importance of mentorship and how it impacted teachers in their development. It was clear that this process was not only a program goal, but something that she wished had been present for her as a new teacher. Another element of mentorship that she highlighted was the possibility for mentorship to play a role with inducting teachers into the school and district. This helped, she says, with developing a “common understanding” before releasing teachers to conduct their work on their own.

Why is it important to have the mentorship? Um, you know, I think that the BTSA design is a really good design The way that it was, you know, designed, I think that it's important because new teachers, um, need somebody to make it to help them. Make it meaningful for them... When I started teaching there wasn't anything like that and I had to go find people to ask You know, help me with this...help me with that and, you know, you're just so overwhelmed as a new teacher just trying to figure out what you're doing and then to...and you just don't even know what questions to ask Um, you know, to have somebody who can come to you and guide you is really critical. ... coming up with common understandings about teaching and helping people to grow collegially at least there should be a mentor whose kinda tapped in dialed in a little bit to what the goals are of the school and the district and who could meet up with that teacher weekly and so that's pretty much where we are is kinda like at least having that because then the short of that you're back to where you have the sink or swim model. (Jessie, 120610, 338-363)

Alice adds to this perspective by highlighting the effects that mentoring had on the PT, and on the SP. What she has seen is that the majority of SPs also indicated that working with PTs has helped them to improve their own teaching. Alice described this reciprocal effect as “paying for one and getting two.” In Alice's district, the Biennial report to the CTC indicated that over 95% of SPs felt that their match with a PT was chosen “well” or “very well.” Additionally, over 90% of PTs and SPs indicated that they felt that their meetings were “effective” or “very effective.” In effect, SPs are going through the same professional development process as PTs and are forced to reflect on their practice in the same way that their PTs were. The effect of this, Alice explains was that PTs became much more reflective on their own practice and worked to improve their pedagogy, as well.

And support providers say to us, like 98% say this is the best professional development for my classroom that I could ever ask for, because of the reciprocal relationship. As a veteran teacher I have guidance and knowledge that I can offer to a new teacher to help them move through the induction process. But those newer teachers come to the table with innovative ideas, with great energy, with wondering and wandering through the process that then energizes me as the support provider to think about my own classroom, what am I doing as far as differentiation for my special population students are concerned. (Alice, 012011, 279-288)

The work that was done through mentoring to improve the instructional practice of teachers, reflecting on teaching practices and placing an emphasis on culturally relevant teaching, reinforced what Alice mentioned earlier in terms of the “bones” of the program. Alice, in making a decision to protect the mentoring elements, preserved the core of her BTSA program. In one interview, she identified the formative assessment element of BTSA as the most

important element to protect in the program because it helped the mentor and the mentee improve on an ongoing basis, even beyond the BTSA process. Alice continued making this point by emphasizing the way that mentoring and reflection helped both the support provider and participating teacher improve their practice. She used the example of culturally relevant teaching to illustrate this point. Where senior teachers might not have been fully invested in using particular strategies or may not have been fully invested in the fundamental ideas of equity, reflecting on their practice and working with the PTs helped them to develop. Alice described this effect as a “two-for-one.”

Well have I really thought about using cultural responsive teaching strategies and how that might engage some of the kids that I just think ‘Oh well, they’re not going to learn anyway.’ It helped me to think in this different way. I’m looking at this teacher who’s struggling to move her practice forward. So it makes me understand that I need to continue to struggle as well to move my practice forward. I’m never perfect, I’m never there. There’s always something more I can learn. This person whom I’m supposed to be mentoring is actually mentoring me also, to help me to think about my practice. So when you look at that, it’s a two-for. You pay for one and you get two. (Alice, 012011, 279-297)

Despite the importance of this work and the perceived efficiency of affecting both the PT and SP with the same professional development investment, funding for SPs was cut within both districts. As a result of these cuts, program coordinators increasingly relied on the relationships that they built with their SPs to squeeze the most out of their SP budgets.

Professional relationships were very important within the BTSA programs because of the increased reliance that BTSA program coordinators placed on using the good will that they accumulated with support providers. Because this is a central component of the BTSA program, as both Jessie and Alice indicated, it was very important that the coaching and mentoring elements of BTSA be maintained. As budgets for programs in both districts were slashed, however, both program coordinators indicated that the amount of funding available to pay for support providers (SP) was cut, as well. In an effort to maintain the integrity of her program, Jessie has maintained much of the mentoring in her program through relying on the “good will” of her SPs. The program in her district initially had over 200 SPs, but many of them left at the conclusion of the previous year.

You know, a lot of them have been really kind and supportive and have said they really appreciate that I’m trying to keep the program going as well it is, you know, they, um,....they’ve been really supportive for the most part. A lot of them, um, dropped out. We had, we were up to 206 So about 50 of them didn’t come back, you know, chose not to continue because of the cuts. So we did lose some. And the ones that have stayed, some of them have complained about the stipend cut but most of them have been very kind. I’ve told them that I’ve tried as much as possible to restore that and you know and whatever to be supportive of them, um, and they’ve been just been really kind (Jessie, 120610, 439-448)

Later in the same interview, Jessie lamented that the well of good will may have been running dry. She recognized the need to find a way to compensate teachers other than through simply being kind to them. Alice indicated in one of her interviews, that she was starting to see the negative impact of this trend in decreased quality of service that can be offered. She saw the reduction in funding for SPs as the cause for this. Because the SPs have started to be spread so thin, the quality of the service that they are able to provide began to decline.

...I feel so blessed and lucky that people are still saying, 'OK, I will be a support provider, even though I'm doing blah blah blah blah.' You know? So you just think, OK I can't ask or OK, I'm going to ask...I will have to be really understanding that it's nothing personal if they say 'I just can't put anything else on my plate.' I can't do it. So even not just our support providers, but people in other departments here in the district, with whom we've had very good relations with in the past in terms of collaborating and putting things together as a joint effort, we don't do that anymore. Because when you call to try to find...'we got another...I'm running here, I'm running there, we're down to four people when we used to have eight people in the department.' I think there's still the will, but there's just not the time or the substance of collaboration in the ways that there have been in the past. So that I think has a huge impact not just on BTSA, but I think it has a huge impact on the district as a whole, because of that collaboration we're able to offer not just to BTSA teachers but to teachers throughout the district, different professional development offerings, and we're not able to do that anymore. (Alice, 012011, 215-234)

As the support that was offered to PTs declined and the pressure that faced BTSA administrators increased, so did the pressure on the BTSA administrators. The research on cutback management predicts that in organizations that are facing declining resources, the most talented individuals will leave if not properly supported or compensated (Levine 1978, Levine, 1979). In an organization that has eliminated all systems of redundancy and institutional memory, one that cut its program down to a single individual or two, losing that key person may have a devastating impact on the program.

## **4.8 District decisions matter**

Another key area of findings was that there are areas in which decisions were made at the district level that had a significant impact on the program outcomes for BTSA. These decisions were either made by BTSA coordinators or other district administrators. Specifically, there are four types of decisions that helped to protect the integrity of the BTSA program at the district level. The four areas were supporting program coordinators, advocating for BTSA, building social capital and program coordinators decision-making. Given the importance of understanding the decisions that can be made on the district level and the potential impact on district-provided programs, these areas have been further articulated in the sub-sections below.

### **4.8.1 District decisions matter – Supporting program coordinators**

One theme that emerged from interviews and observations was the fact that the decisions that school districts make matter. The decisions of district administrators and program coordinators had a strong impact on the success of the program. The support provided to

program coordinators by district administrators was one of the primary factors that seemed to make the difference in protecting BTSA coordinators, who may be *free-exiters* from leaving the district.

With both programs, the BTSA administrators indicated that they relied on others for support in identifying best practices, finding resources and encouragement, the people that they relied on are different. While both programs indicated that they have others that they could rely on for support, there was difference in the role that this person played in the program for each of the coordinators. Alice indicated that the primary person that she relied on for support was the associate superintendent in her school district that oversaw the human resources department. She indicated that the new relationship that she was forging with the then-new human resources assistant superintendent was very encouraging.

The new superintendent, the new assistant superintendent of Human Resources, she actually knows BTSA. She knows it, but in a different way. She came from a setting where they were part of a consortia, and it's different. She had to really tweak her view of things because we're a single district program. Our district is the LEA, we're in a consortium there's a county office of ED that gets all the funding and then they disperse the money out to the people in a consortium. It's just us here. So that was a different point of view that she had to really shift her thinking around. (Alice 121610, 309-315)

Alice's perceptions of the new superintendent's perspective on BTSA were reinforced by an interview that I held with her. She opened with noting the positive elements of the program and structural differences that she saw between the program in the current district and with the BTSA program in the district that she originated from. She shared that the idea of having a BTSA program housed within the school district is better than one that is operated by the county office of education.

I'll just start out by saying this is probably one of the finest BTSA programs I've come in contact with. I mean (Alice) truly is wonderful. She has a great handle on it, and I don't want to get too far off your questions, but the thing that most impresses me or makes it easiest to actually do work with, is that we are our own BTSA provider, unlike a lot of other school districts who link into a county program. ...we're in touch with the teachers more often, we're in touch with the mentors more often, we're more accessible to them, and so I think it's more of a quality program... (Hayden, 031211, 15-24)

Perhaps the reason for her enthusiasm surrounding BTSA comes from her own history with the program. Hayden mentioned that she was once a SP within an BTSA program, sometime around 1990. She also indicated that she understood the impact that the program has on the formation of new teachers. She also reflected on the same philosophy that Alice mentioned in a previous interview. Hayden shared that she thought that BTSA had as much of an impact on her and other SPs as it did on the PTs that were mentored.

I was a BTSA mentor, and we literally were rewriting the program the whole year, because it was massive, massive paperwork. We knew that we weren't going to get

people to go through it as well as do their daily work in the classroom...it was the equivalent of getting a Masters Degree. It was amazing the amount of paperwork. So we streamlined it. I kind of was part of that first growing phase of it. It was great, you know the mentors learn as much from it as the mentees, because any time you can teach someone else, or any time you can guide someone else, it's not so much that they teach, they kind of facilitate. They just become stronger in their own belief system and in the way that they do things. Because their out and about and their seeing the effects. (Hayden, 031211, 80-89)

Another important factor that was noted both by Alice and Hayden was the importance of BTSA as an induction program to the district. Hayden continued by emphasizing the importance of aligning the district BTSA program with the school district's general professional development program. This concept was well-aligned with the emphasis that Alice stated previously on aligning the BTSA program with the district vision and using the program's induction program to help develop a common understanding between the district's teachers and the district.

What I've done before is that we connect with Ed services to make sure that we're aligning...even though BTSA has the specific criteria that a teacher needs to go through, we align with our Ed services department to match and share with the staff development piece of it. That's what I'm most used to doing is working with them for that PD piece of it. It truly has been a responsibility in terms of identifying who needs, it, in terms of matching them, and the interview process for mentors has always come under human resources. (Hayden, 031211, 72-78)

Beyond the alignment of ideas, there seemed to be a genuine enthusiasm for the program and the work that Alice was doing. Alice perceived this attitude and was very receptive to the feedback that she received from Hayden. Further, although Alice felt that she was under a great deal of pressure, she expressed a view that she believes that some funding will be returned to the BTSA program and that Hayden was an advocate for the program. This implies a level of confidence and trust that Alice had in Hayden. Hayden also shared that she supports Alice and the program because she recognized that Alice was successful and is doing good work. This implies a level of confidence that Hayden has in Alice, as well.

I'm there just as a support. For instance, when her state team came in for pre-visit, I was there, and was mostly for moral support. I think she appreciated that. I know she appreciated that. But truly there wasn't much for me to do. I'm not one of those people who likes to take credit for something I didn't do...that's just not me. Truly there's not much, just to be supportive and then to champion the program so it didn't get cut. And if she needed anything and I could find the money to do it, I'd be the first one in your corner because she has proven the success. (Hayden, 031211, 189-196)



In contrast to the level of support that Alice felt within her school district, Jessie indicated that she did not have a strong level of support from her supervisors. During early interviews, she did indicate that there was not a high level of support from within her district, but that she relied on support from her cluster director and from other BTSA coordinators in her cluster and in neighboring districts. By the end of the study, Jessie decided to leave the district and found another job within another district playing the same role. She was a *free-exiter* as Levine described. She mentioned that although there had been some change in her district, the change was not strong enough to dissuade her from leaving the district. Beyond the lack of support, there was also a feeling that the district did not see the importance of the work that she was doing.

(It) was the feeling that there was a lack of emphasis on the program and that I felt like I wasn't going to be able to make any progress and my position had become very technical, just basically keeping the technical aspects of the program intact and not having a vision. I felt that I had no influence in the district as far as a broader vision for teacher development and recruitment and development and retention type line, which is what I wanted to see. I saw the place of BTSA as being sort of like a leper for teacher development and teacher leadership development. (Jessie, 032511, 55-61)

In addition to the general sense that BTSA was not a priority within her district, Jessie continued by indicating that BTSA was treated as an “unfunded mandate.” The school district received more than 1.7 million dollars for the program in the year that Jessie left, according to Jessie. It spent only approximately 200,000 dollars to operate it. Because of the Tier III status of the program, she explained that BTSA was treated as if there was little if any funding for the program. The emphasis was on meeting the state guidelines for operating the program, but there does not seem to be a deeper understanding of the importance of the program. This mismatch between Jessie's goals for the program and the districts stood in contrast to the relationship that Alice had with Hayden.

I think that since it's becomes sort of like an unfunded mandate, that it's experiencing the same kind of problems that any unfunded mandate experiences, which is how do you produce the results that you're supposed to produce based on the law or the intention of it, without any of the resources, or without any viable resources. So you can't plan really well, you can't implement really well, people's morale is low, and that impacts planning and implementation and that's true for education in general, I think it's suffering the same. I just wonder when people start looking at...if there's a wider perception that this is just sort of a compliance and a hoop to jump through because it can't be implemented that well, then how is that going to...what are lawmakers or people at the state level going to start to say, you know, 'well, we need to make some cuts somewhere, so let's cut this completely.' What does that mean for credentialing; I think it's just kind of an open question. (Jessie, 032511, 141-152)

#### 4.8.2 District decisions matter – Advocating for BTSA and the power of social capital

Social capital can be especially important for BTSA administrators as they attempt to resist cuts or negotiate compromise to protect elements of the program. By having the support of key individuals within the school district, especially cabinet-level administrators and school board members, BTSA administrators can rely on the advocacy of these individuals to help protect the program. Within one of the districts that were studied, a cabinet-level administrator successfully lobbied to protect the BTSA program from being suspended.

District administrators, advocating for BTSA, were effective in protecting program funding. In some districts, the BTSA program had to compete to get its share of the BTSA block grant as resources for general-fund items became scarcer. Advocates for BTSA had to become creative with the strategies that they used to support the program. BTSA supporters sought to undermine the withdrawal of resources from their program using, among other strategies, political tact and advocacy with their school boards and cabinet members. By building support for the program with this key individual, BTSA found a new advocate. This cabinet member, Hayden, shared that when the cabinet began to discuss the possibility of cutting the BTSA program, she chose to make a board presentation regarding the impact that BTSA had on teacher quality. The result of making this presentation was that the idea of cutting or suspending the BTSA program was not raised again.

There were a lot of pressures initially, but I saved the program. We're not cutting the BTSA program. I don't know how many more mentees we'd be able to add to it, but our obligation—and this is a state obligation—is that the folks that have started, we're obligated to see them through it. So we have not made any cuts. It was a strategy, I don't know if I want you to quote me on this, it was a strategy on my part to have (Alice) come and present to the School board a couple months ago on the success of her program and the accreditation and invite the school board in so that when it became an issue that it was going to be one of those items that could be cut, they would be supportive of why it shouldn't be. (Hayden, 031211, 130-139)

Hayden articulated two things above: her dedication to protect the program and her conscious efforts to use a specific strategy to resist the organizational decline that she anticipated for BTSA (Levine, 1978). By providing the school board with information concerning BTSA and the connection between BTSA and teacher quality, Hayden was able to establish the importance of the program to the school board. As she explained, by providing the board with data and information regarding BTSA's impact on teacher quality, she was able to establish that BTSA was not simply about completing the process for clearing a credential, the work in BTSA had an important impact on teaching ability.

(The school board) had a great response. (School Board member's name), who was well-versed in it, understood it very, very well and it was a well-taken report, and they tied it in with the highly qualified teachers tabs report because it all goes into how they become highly qualified. Because for me things aren't just about terms and about completing

things, it's about the integrity of the program, you know, that I don't want any teacher to take their time and go through a program if it's just to meet a requirement. Don't take it if it's not going to be a...I mean, they have to take it, but I want to make it so that it's valuable. I don't want anybody spending their time outside of the classroom any more than they already do with something that is not meaningful and relevant. (Hayden, 031211, 140-152)

When asked about the outcome from the strategy that she put in place to resist cuts to the program, Hayden explained that the school board reacted favorably and that the issue of cutting or suspending the program was not raised anymore. By sharing the program goals that both Alice and Hayden emphasized and how this work impacted teacher quality, Hayden protected that program. This type of advocacy is important because it relies on creating awareness of an important program. Once the board and cabinet were made aware of the importance of BTSA and its impact on teacher quality, no one wanted to make further cuts. Communication was the critical factor and BTSA was not placed on the chopping block in Hayden's district from that point forward.

Well, that was my strategy for getting it there. Then it was never mentioned again. We talked about it in our Cabinet planning, about BTSA, and very early on decided, well not very early on, about two or three weeks ago, decided to save it, or knew we were going to save it, and the Board never questioned, never brought it up again. (Hayden, 031211, 153-157)

While efforts like Hayden's showed effectiveness in preventing the elimination or suspension of BTSA, there still were widespread cuts in both districts. Both school districts took the majority of the BTSA Block Grant funds and used them to support other programs in the districts. Utilizing the new freedom to use the money as the district wishes meant that many staff positions were cut from the program, along with funding for Support Providers (SP). By clearly establishing to the school board and the cabinet that BTSA is an important program, Hayden was able to protect the program from irresponsibly severe cuts.

#### **4.8.3 District decisions matter – Building social capital**

As mentioned in the previous section, building social capital and gaining the support of district administrators, school board members and cluster directors can benefit BTSA administrators. Alliances and support from within school districts can help BTSA administrators to resist cuts, address unfunded mandates and also helps with retaining BTSA administrators within school districts. As previously stated in the findings, the relationships that are built with district administrators also help to make BTSA administrators feel valued by the district and less likely to leave. Additionally, it is important that BTSA administrators reach out to site administrators to help with the program's success.

Building social capital with site administrators may be an effective way of monitoring the effectiveness of the program, now that many of the assistants and other support players have

been cut. Hayden points out that site administrators are an essential part of operating an effective program, because the site administrators can identify who is involved with BTSA, share ideas and coordinate with the district coordinator and SPs. The site level administrators can help the program by serving as an “extra pair of hands” that the program coordinators can use to provide feedback to SPs and an extra set of eyes to monitor implementation. Using this system would be a low-cost approach to help create a system of redundancy and will increase the program’s capacity.

If you establish that relationship, which I don’t know if that is here, but it should be, in that the principals need to know who their BTSA people are, they need to have been told up front who they are. They need to know who those support providers are so that they can have that ongoing support. So that if a support provider comes to you and says ‘You know, I need this, that, and the other thing’ you’re there to help. Ultimately they’re an extra pair of hands for you. Support for their teachers. Being the whole point is not just that they complete their credential, but then they’re successful in our classrooms with our kids. (Hayden, 031211, 118-125)

Principals and other site administrators might also be a valuable asset in addressing the unfunded mandates that BTSA programs still must address. By building support with site administrators, BTSA administrators can address many of the issues. The capacity that can be built by building these support networks can be very helpful in addressing unfunded mandates and also helps districts. Hayden addressed the issue of site administrators needing to be trained to help address some of the logistical challenges that BTSA is facing.

Some principals are really involved in (BTSA accreditation), others just know what happens. And so that is a challenge. The challenge is to bring principals on board. So I did have her come to principals meetings and give input. Perhaps maybe there could be a training or something for principals. I need them, well we need them, the teacher needs them to be involved so that if they ask to be out of a classroom to go to do a visit, you see that or the principal sees that as valuable time spent as opposed to missing their class. (Hayden, 031211, 286-298)

The ways in which BTSA administrators accumulated social capital varied between districts. While Alice gained some social capital with her BTSA cluster lead through maintaining regular communication with him, the process that was used within school districts was different. District administrators indicated that they looked at the performance of the BTSA program and administrator when deciding on whether or not to support the program. Being a successful administrator helps in building capital, and success was defined in three different ways. The BTSA program’s effectiveness was judged by the data in the biennial report and feedback from other district administrators, whereas BTSA administrators were judged by their performance evaluations and the feedback from their immediate supervisors. With Alice, it was because of the positive reviews that she received from her direct supervisor that Hayden placed so much trust in her. Hayden shared her perspective on why she feels very comfortable advocating for Alice. She indicated that she felt comfortable supporting her because Alice received favorable reviews and was able to operate the BTSA program effectively without needing much help from outside of her program.

If she calls and says she needs something, I try to make it happen for her. I think this year going through the accreditation process, she was so well-prepared, she had it so in hand, I truly have not had to do much. She's always been under (the director of human resources), and she still is. (The director human resources) is her evaluator. And (the director of human resources) hasn't had to do much. She's truly one of those people you can turn the program over to and it's successful. So I'm there just as a support. For instance, when her state team came in for pre-visit, I was there, and was mostly for moral support. I think she appreciated that. I know she appreciated that. But truly there wasn't much for me to do... Truly there's not much, just to be supportive and then to champion the program so it didn't get cut. (Hayden, 031211, 185-194)

#### **4.8.4 District decisions matter – Program coordinators**

As the cuts that districts face became more and more severe, there were two approaches that program coordinators took when implementing the cuts. Either they resisted the cuts and advocated to protect the funding as much as possible or they tried to smooth the program's decline and protect the core elements of the program. Within both districts, the program coordinators practiced a bit of each strategy. Within both districts, each coordinator began with similar goals, but they both saw different results.

The core elements that the program coordinators chose to protect within their districts matched the overall goals for BTSA and the mandates associated with the program. Both program coordinators identified the two core elements of the program that they wanted to protect. With both districts, the formative assessment process and mentoring were identified as being the essential elements of the program. This sentiment fits well with the induction standards and the core mission of BTSA. The formative assessment's emphasis on a cycle of inquiry was useful in developing qualified teachers. The mentoring element of the program proved to be effective in increasing teacher retention.

The interviews with both program coordinators confirmed that they were committed to protecting these elements of the program and that they were aware of the connection of these elements to the success of their student teachers, as well as the requirements of the program, as articulated in the induction program standards. Alice indicated a need to avoid cutting to the "bones" of the program: mentoring and formative assessment.

The bones for me is the formative assessment and we used the new teacher centers' formative assessment system. That one on one relationship and mentoring with the support provider. That can't be compromised. If we compromise on that we've lost the program. ...the inquiry and that's all around the formative assessment but having teachers really being reflective, collaborative practitioners who are looking at growing their practice. If I could hold onto that with what we offer our teachers in our inquiry, then I think I'm still holding on to the integrity of the program. (Alice, 121610, 98-108)

Despite the challenges that BTSA administrators faced, they were able to make conscious decisions regarding the elements of the program that were most important to protect and the elements that they wanted to recover as quickly as possible. Alice and Jessie had similar responses, indicating that the core elements of the program that needed to be protected were the

reflective elements that focused on the teaching practice and formative assessment of the impact of instruction. This focus was consistent with what the authors of SB 2042 indicated as goals for the BTSA program.

we had an awful lot of teachers that seemed to be leaving the profession quickly and we realized that if we were going to have these standards and we were going to hold people accountable you needed the proper textbooks and the proper training for teachers how could you expect them to do some things when you're changing things as a state. How could we support the teachers, how we're going to get more people in the profession and how were we going to keep them in the profession. (Alpert, 111109, 77-84)

The priority that Alice and Jessie placed on formative assessment and mentoring required some interpretation of the BTSA program goals. While there are numerous program goals and induction standards, the severity of the cuts required that both program coordinators consider what elements of the program were most critical. This interpretive element of the decision-making process is very important. As we saw, a failure to align the goals of a program with what the district wanted and what the state wanted could result in catastrophic consequences, such as the inability to successfully advocate for the program. Fortunately, the interpretation that both coordinators made seemed to be consistent with the goals that the legislators had for the program. Alice stated that she believed that formative assessment was critical because it improves teacher quality for both PTs and SPs. Further, the research on mentorship, as outlined in the literature review clearly demonstrates that having a mentor or coach is critical to teacher retention.

Alpert and Mazzoni, the authors of SB 2042, both confirmed in their interviews that the ideas of teacher quality and retention were central to the focus of SB 2042 which governs the implementation of the BTSA program. They also confirmed the findings of the Hafner and Maxie study (2006), which stated that SB 2042 was focused on both teacher retention and improving teacher quality. For Alice, she focuses on the process of formative assessment that the new teacher center model emphasizes.

#### 4.9 Summary of findings

The information that was shared regarding decision-making by BTSA administrators has provided insight regarding the implementation of BTSA during austere times. The pressures that face BTSA administrators; the impact of resource decline; the accuracy of cutback management in predicting outcomes and strategies for BTSA administrators; as well as the interpretations that have been made of BTSA goals in decision-making all have been important factors. Below is a summary of how these items have impacted the decision-making of BTSA administrators:

- **Two key pressures are impacting the decision-making process of BTSA administrators: pressure to implement cuts and pressure to implement the program to fidelity.**

- **Implementing cuts** - As the budget cuts have become more severe, the pressure to implement deeper cuts to BTSA has increased.
- **Implementing the program to fidelity** - BTSA officials have placed pressure on BTSA administrators to continue to implement the program to fidelity. This pressure is seen primarily through the accreditation process.
- **Pressure to compromise** – because BTSA administrators are unable to totally resist the cuts that districts have put in place, it is not possible for them to totally implement the cuts that the district may push for. Similarly, because of the cuts to resources, it is not possible for BTSA administrators to implement all aspects of the program as effectively as they would prior to the cuts. The result has been that BTSA administrators are identifying elements of the program that they view as essential to keeping BTSA operational and effective and are resisting cuts to those areas, while implementing cuts to areas that they feel are less critical.
- **BTSA administrators have been forced to decide how to respond to declining resources – BTSA administrators have responded to the cuts by either finding ways to resist the cuts or finding ways to smooth organizational decline:**
  - **Resisting cuts** – BTSA administrators have resisted cuts, by finding key allies who are willing to advocate for the program. Allies may include district administrators, cluster directors and school board members. By making program goals clear and championing the effectiveness of the program, the severity of cuts can be lessened. In some cases, limited funding may be partially restored.
  - **Implementing cuts** – BTSA administrators have implemented the cuts by identifying what they believe to be the core elements of the program and protecting these elements, while not resisting cuts to other elements that they view as less critical.
  - **Compromise** – A third decision that BTSA administrators may take is to compromise between implementing large cuts and resisting cuts altogether. BTSA administrators may also compromise and resist cuts to some areas through advocacy, while accepting other cuts without resisting as a means to compromise and maintain good relationships.
- **Decisions and outcomes that have resulted from BTSA administrators are largely anticipated by established research on cutback management:**
  - **Ripple effect** – cuts to seemingly superficial positions and elements of the program have had an unanticipated effect on BTSA. Cuts to clerical positions and travel have impacted the ability of BTSA administrators to collaborate and decreased the ability of BTSA administrators to complete

more essential tasks because they are spending more time completing clerical work

- **Identifying core goals and objectives** – BTSA administrators have identified mentoring and formative assessment as the core elements of the BTSA program largely because they relate to the primary objectives of BTSA: improving teacher quality and increasing teacher retention.
  - **Unfunded mandates** - The state has continued to press for implementation of all aspects of the program through its accreditation process. Although resources have been cut from the program by school districts, the expectation is that programs will continue to run effectively and implement BTSA fully.
  - **Free-exiters** – BTSA administrators may be retained by having supportive district administrators. The presence of district administrative staff members that understand the importance of BTSA and are willing to advocate for the program has an impact on the decisions that BTSA administrators make to stay within or leave a district. Conversely, district administrators who do not feel supported or who feel that BTSA is not highly-valued within their district may be likely to leave.
- **Identifying core program elements - As anticipated by cutback management research, effective managers identify core program goals and objectives when faced with declining resources. This led to the protection of two essential elements of BTSA.**
    - **Formative assessment** – BTSA administrators indicated that they believe that formative assessment is a key element of the BTSA program because it improves the quality of teaching for new teachers. Administrators from both programs indicated that they were active in protecting this element of the program. BTSA administrators also indicated that the reflective element of formative assessment impacts both the SPs and PTs.
    - **Mentoring** – BTSA administrators indicated that mentoring is another area that they are actively protecting because it is key to the development and retention of new teachers
    - **Collaboration and communication** – the unanticipated effects of cuts to clerical staff and travel has reduced the ability of BTSA administrators to communicate with SPs, monitor the program effectively and collaborate.
    - **Equity** – Despite severe cuts, BTSA administrators have found partners who are willing to ensure that an emphasis on equity is maintained. This has happened through leveraging professional development resources for ELD and by partnering with local university staff.



- **Other findings – other findings related the importance of redundancy, relationships and district decisions also emerged from this study. Below is a summary:**
  - **Redundancy matters** - By eliminating some systems that require redundancy, such as having multiple individuals responsible to implement an element of the program, increased reliance has been placed on individual staff members. If these individuals leave, the impact on the program can be substantial.
  - **Social capital matters** – SPs and other district staff have contributed time and energy to preserving the BTSA program within their district. BTSA administrators indicated that many of these individuals have agreed to do substantial amounts of work for less money or for free based on the strong relationships and trust that they have developed with BTSA administrators. Additionally, building strong relationships with key district administrators, site-level administrators and other advocates can be very helpful in protecting program funding and addressing capacity issues and unfunded mandates.
  - **Districts matter** – The decisions that districts make regarding BTSA, such as deciding whether to resist cuts or smooth decline, whether to support BTSA administrators or not all had an impact on the types of programs that these districts are able to offer.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

#### 5.1 Results

This study set out to examine the impact of the various pressures on BTSA administrators and to explore how the pressures affect decision-making. Declining resources act as a pressure, so it is important to understand how cutback management research predicts the decisions that BTSA administrators make and the associated outcomes. The different interpretations of BTSA program goals, how administrators decide which elements of the program to protect and which elements to de-emphasize were also considered. This study set out to respond to four research questions:

- What pressures are facing BTSA administrators?
- How are declining resources and related pressures impacting decision-making by BTSA administrators?
- How well does established cutback management research predict the decisions that BTSA administrators make and the outcomes that result from their decisions?
- How do different interpretations of BTSA program goals impact the decision-making process when facing declining resources?

The study of these two large, urban districts' BTSA programs found that three primary pressures are impacting the decision-making process of BTSA administrators. Two of these pressures conflict with one another while the third pressure is a pressure to compromise between the other two. There are conflicting pressures placed on them to implement cuts that result from BTSA block grant funds being swept into the general fund, while a conflicting pressure presses them to implement the program to fidelity. This pressure to run BTSA to fidelity is undermined by the cuts to BTSA that have been made by sweeping the majority of BTSA Block Grant dollars into the district general fund. The third pressure that is facing administrators is encouraging BTSA administrators to protect certain elements of the program, while implementing cuts to other areas. For the most part, BTSA administrators have chosen to move in this direction rather than totally acquiescing to district pressure or the pressure to resist all cuts. By having a clear understanding of the pressures that BTSA administrators are facing, they may adapt appropriately and respond with the appropriate strategy. This may mean to either protect elements of the program, acquiesce to the cuts and implement smoothly or to compromise with allies.

Declining resources and related pressures are impacting the decision-making processes of BTSA administrators. Because they must decide how to respond to declining resources, BTSA administrators have responded to the cuts by either finding ways to resist the cuts or finding ways to smooth organizational decline. This is related to the previous question of what pressures are facing BTSA administrators

BTSA administrators have resisted cuts by working with allies who are willing to advocate for the program such as cluster directors and school board members. Making program goals clear and touting the success of the program, the severity of cuts can be decreased. BTSA administrators have implemented the cuts by identifying what they believe to be the core elements of the program and protecting these elements, while not resisting cuts to other elements that they view as less critical. In some cases, limited funding may be partially restored as a result of compromises that result from a combination of advocacy and accepting cuts when necessary. This seems to be the most reasonable approach to take, given the reality that school districts are also facing immense pressure to bring in every dollar possible to the general fund.

Research on effective cutback management strategies and outcomes was reliable in predicting the decisions that BTSA administrators make and the outcomes that resulted from their decisions. In particular, decisions and outcomes that have resulted from BTSA administrators were largely anticipated by established research on cutback management along four themes: unanticipated effects of cuts, a rising necessity to identify core goals and objectives, the pervasiveness of unfunded mandates, the need to support talented staff and to prevent their departure.

Cuts to seemingly clerical and support positions and travel expenses seemed to be wise choices for places to save money, but had an unanticipated effect on BTSA. Cutting clerical positions decreased the ability of BTSA administrators to complete more essential tasks, such as monitoring mentoring progress and formative assessments, checking in with SPs and PTs, and providing professional development to SPs. Further, because they are spending more time completing clerical work, BTSA administrators have had less time to commit to ensuring that their programs are run effectively. Although it is impossible to fully anticipate the effects that a reduction in staffing or expenses will have on the overall program, it would behoove BTSA administrators to be mindful that every cut may carry unanticipated consequences. By building in systems of redundancy, BTSA administrators can smooth the impact of cuts. Having a secondary person in place that can help to cover for lost personnel will allow BTSA administrators to prevent total loss of particular skills. This means that administrators should build capacity and resist cuts to their departments that will leave only one person in charge of all aspects of the program. Having a part-time clerical staff member and a part-time assistant (perhaps a teacher on special assignment or a retired SP) may be a low-cost approach to building capacity and productive redundancy.

The research was also clear on the need for effective managers to identify central goals and objectives of an organization that is facing decline, BTSA administrators have identified mentoring and formative assessment as the core elements of the BTSA program largely because they relate to the primary objectives of BTSA. Improving teacher quality and increasing teacher retention. BTSA administrators will need help from the CTC and CDE to give guidance on how to implement cuts and which areas to protect. Advocacy on the part of cluster directors will also be needed to help resist cuts to essential areas of the program.

The state has continued to press for implementation of all aspects of the program through its accreditation process, although resources have been cut from the program by school districts. The expectation is that programs will continue to run effectively and implement BTSA fully. A weighted system for emphasizing the core elements of BTSA would be helpful for BTSA directors who must make careful decisions about what areas of the program to protect. Having these areas identified by the state will help cluster directors in advocating on behalf of their

program coordinators. It will also help program coordinators in deciding which areas of the program to emphasize.

Retaining BTSA administrators is essential, especially given the elimination of systems of redundancy and increased reliance on individual staff members to run entire BTSA programs. Having district administrative staff members who support and understand BTSA has an impact on the retention of BTSA administrators. District administrators who do not feel supported or who feel that BTSA is not highly-valued within their district may be likely to leave. It is important that districts make an effort to support these key personnel by working closely with them and providing them with the resources necessary to implement a successful program.

Different interpretations of BTSA program goals impact the decision-making process as BTSA administrators are forced to identify what they believe are the key elements of the BTSA program. This process is highly- subjective because the state has not given cluster directors or program coordinators guidance on which elements of the program should be emphasized. It is clear that effective managers must identify core program goals and objectives when faced with declining resources. It must be made more clear which elements of the program must be emphasized. While formative assessment and mentoring seem to be reasonable choices, it is not clear that the state has a preference. Although there is a risk that emphasizing certain elements of the program could lead to the elimination of the program, the state can protect itself from that by incorporating this change into its accreditation progress. By requiring that all elements of the program are present, while emphasizing the importance of other elements of the program, the state can send the message that the program must be fully implemented, although certain areas of the program should be emphasized.

## **5.2 Implications**

The decisions that BTSA administrators make have a strong influence on program outcomes. The types of results that are seen depend upon the ability of program leaders to make effective decisions on cutback management. Levine's work on cutback management anticipates many of the challenges and effective strategies that have been observed during the course of the current economic downturn. Among the more challenging issues that the programs have had to face have been protecting the core program, maintaining key resources and staff and finding ways to ensure that the collaborative element of BTSA remains intact.

The BTSA program is a very complex intervention that is designed to improve teacher quality and retention. This is an especially important matter to school districts that serve historically underserved communities. Although the current economic crisis may have temporarily alleviated some of the difficulty that districts have historically had in recruiting new teachers, the research indicates that there is a high likelihood that many of these newly-recruited teachers will attempt to move to school districts in more affluent areas and districts that serve larger percentages of students with greater resources at their disposal. Further, research is clear that BTSA not only helps to retain these teachers, but it also helps them to become better practitioners.

In order to protect BTSA, important work must be done by program coordinators. Ensuring that the core elements of mentoring and formative assessment are protected from even

the most severe cuts must be a primary task. These two elements of the program touch on multiple California induction program standards and match the recommendations of the large studies that have been conducted on BTSA. As the coordinators in this study have shared, these two elements also create a ripe environment to implement the other elements. If possible, it is important to find ways to encourage collaboration, as well.

The state legislature put certain categorical funds in Tier III status for a reason: the current economic crisis is severe and every dollar is needed to maintain essential programs within school districts across the state. Despite the temptation to take all of these funds and move them into the general fund, school districts should be mindful of the long-term effects of cutting categorical programs like BTSA too severely. Extreme cuts to large programs that eliminate all clerical support and redundancy within a program place the long-term viability of those programs in jeopardy.

As was evident from the two districts that were a part of this study, not only does making those cuts make programs, less efficient, it makes the programs more reliant on individual employees than they should be. Because of the severe pressure on these programs, it is possible, even likely, for the most talented and essential employees to seek employment in other districts as the cuts become more pronounced. By placing too much responsibility on these individuals, the district does itself a disservice as it may find that there is no institutional knowledge of BTSA beyond the final employee after that individual has left. It is important to maintain a certain level of redundancy, perhaps through a less costly position to avoid this dilemma.

Further, district administrators should provide as much support as is possible to program coordinators. It was made clear from the program coordinators in both districts that it is very important that district administrators make a point of listening to the needs of the program coordinators, and then find ways to ensure that the core elements of the program are protected. The results of this study indicate that one effective method for protecting BTSA from severe cuts is to share the data and research that connects the work being done through BTSA and student achievement. Once district cabinet and board members become aware of how much of an impact BTSA has on teacher quality, the perceived value of the program increases dramatically. Because district administrators have the most voice with the board and other cabinet members, it is important that they take the opportunity to advocate.

It is also important that BTSA administrators be aware of what they can do to build social capital and social networks that will help them to address the capacity issues and unfunded mandates that they are facing. First, it is important that BTSA administrators make program goals clear and that the successes of the program be made clear. Second, it is important that BTSA administrators ensure that they are effective in meeting the needs of the school district. Of course, this is a delicate balance as administrators must also advocate for BTSA to resist cuts. Nonetheless, it is clear from my findings that having the support of supervisors is a powerful element of developing a successful BTSA program. This also benefits district administrators. As social capital increases and more individuals within the district are trained and understand BTSA, then the program becomes less reliant on individual staff members to implement the program, turnover becomes less likely, and if it does happen, the effects may be less impactful.

### 5.3 Recommendations for BTSA

In answering the research questions posed for this study a few effective strategies have emerged that school districts, BTSA administrators and senior BTSA administrators should consider. Below I have made some recommendations related to the conclusions drawn from this study for each of these groups. It is my hope that by being conscious of the pressures facing the BTSA program, districts and BTSA administrators can respond effectively to the challenges that they are facing.

#### **BTSA Administrators**

- **Build social capital** – building partnerships with colleagues, supervisors and board members can be a free and effective way to resist budget cuts, address unfunded mandates and build capacity
- **Promote BTSA program successes** – by promoting the successes of the BTSA program, this study found that it becomes easier to build social capital and to advocate for preserving the BTSA program.
- **Decide consciously when to resist cuts, implement cuts or compromise** – the usefulness of each strategy depends on the circumstances and environment surrounding the situation. Budget environment, social capital and the identification and protection of key program elements should all be considered when deciding whether to resist a particular cut, smooth organizational decline in one area or to compromise.

#### **Districts**

- **Invest in redundancy** – providing program coordinators with part-time staff and clerical support is useful in decreasing the dependence on individual staff members to implement a program and decreases the impact and risks associated with turnover.
- **Increase capacity by training site administrators and other district personnel** – providing training to site administrators and to other district personnel will increase capacity throughout the district and will be useful in creating healthy systems of redundancy.

#### **Senior BTSA administration**

- **Identify elements of BTSA that should be emphasized** – with funds being swept into Tier III statewide, senior BTSA officials should anticipate significant cuts to BTSA programs throughout the state. Without identifying the key elements of programs that should be emphasized, the state's ability to ensure the preservation of the core elements of BTSA is diminished.

### 5.4 Recommendations for future research

Despite some very interesting findings from this study, more comprehensive research should be done to confirm the findings of this study through a larger and longer study. The limitations on time and resources prevented the study from looking at the effects of budget cuts across a large number of districts. Having a much larger sample size and a longer period of time

to measure the effects of various decisions would provide valuable insight into the longer term effects of these decisions.

There are also new questions that were raised with this study. One example is the question of how can program requirements be adjusted to account for the current levels of austerity. Such a study would look at how the state and other governing agencies can avoid creating unfunded mandates and create realistic goals that can be achieved with the budgets that have been provided. Another related question is how districts can be better informed of the value of BTSA as a program. Because the program is looked at by many as simply a requirement for clearing one's credential, it is often overlooked as a valuable induction tool that can be used to improve the quality of teachers within districts.

The impact of BTSA on schools and districts that served historically underserved communities is clear. With the most recent cuts that are happening to BTSA, future research is needed to determine if there has been a disproportionate effect on communities of color and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities as a result. Examples of areas that should be examined include looking at how underserved groups can organize and advocate protecting BTSA. Research on how retention of teachers has been impacted in socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Further, studies of how districts that serve communities of color and low-income communities can inform their stakeholders and encourage them to advocate for BTSA. This might also provide insight regarding how BTSA can be protected within the communities that rely on it most heavily.

### **5.3 Closing comments**

As California grapples with how to address the challenges of equity in its school system, it must not ignore the importance of retaining quality teachers in the schools that serve historically underserved groups. Because of the tremendous impact that teacher experience has on student success, retaining the best instructors is especially important in communities of color and SED areas. This places BTSA at the heart of the struggle to create equitable learning opportunities for all of California's youth. Further, the high attrition rate of teachers in these schools makes the retention of teachers more difficult, as budgets are stretched to retain more new teachers. With the most recent economic downturn, and educational budgets being tightened significantly, there is a need to examine the decisions that are being made to preserve essential programs that are aimed at retaining quality teachers, especially in school districts that serve large populations of SED students and students of color.

Improving education for our students who need the support the most begins with providing all of our students top quality teachers. Because BTSA is the primary tool that most districts have to address the issue of new teacher quality, it is essential that this program's integrity be protected so that our young people are given the best opportunity to learn. A failure to listen to the voices of the professionals involved in implementing this program would be a serious mistake for California's education system. As one program coordinator indicated, we have "cut into the flesh" of our programs already. It is essential that we protect the core of this essential program.

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