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Action

Professional Services Committee

Initial Institutional Approval

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents one prospective program sponsor for initial institutional approval by the Commission.

Recommended Action: That the Commission approve the application for initial institutional approval submitted by Santa Clara County Office of Education.

Presenter: Teri Clark, Administrator,
Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal: 1

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation and performance of professional educators and for the accreditation of credential programs

April 2009

Initial Institutional Approval

Introduction

This agenda item presents one prospective program sponsor for initial institutional approval. The institution is the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE). SCCOE is not the first county office of education to seek institutional approval to offer educator preparation programs. A number of other county offices and school districts offer district intern programs. In addition, some county offices or school districts such as the Santa Barbara County Education Office, Los Angeles Unified, and San Diego County Office of Education offer programs to prepare individuals for the administrative services credential.

Background: Initial Institutional Approval

Prior to 1995, institutions not previously approved to offer programs of professional preparation would submit a program proposal responding to the preconditions and standards of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. If the institution was accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) or another regional accrediting body and if the response to the preconditions and standards was judged to be satisfactory, the Commission voted to give approval to the institution to begin offering one or more educator preparation programs.

With the adoption of the *Accreditation Framework* in 1995, the Commission made a distinction between “initial approval of institutions” and “initial approval of programs,” as described below.

Policies for Initial Approval of Institutions

Pursuant to California Education Code, the Commission has the authority to determine the eligibility of institutions to offer educator preparation programs and to recommend issuance of credentials to candidates completing programs of preparation. This authority also applies to other program sponsors such as county offices of education, who were made eligible to sponsor professional educator preparation programs through subsequent legislation.

Education Code Section § 44227 (a) – The Commission may approve any institution of higher education whose teacher education program meets the standards prescribed by the Commission, to recommend to the Commission the issuance of credentials to persons who have successfully completed those programs.

Education Code Section § 44372 – The powers and duties of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing regarding the accreditation system shall include the following:

- (c) Rule on the eligibility of an applicant for accreditation when the applying institution has not previously prepared educators for state certification in California, pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 44227.

Adopted Procedures for Initial Institutional Approval and Initial Program Approval

An institution that wishes to offer a credential program in California and that has not previously been declared eligible to offer a credential preparation program must undergo a two stage initial approval process: 1) initial institutional approval, and 2) initial approval of programs as described below. The steps in the Commission's accreditation system were described in the Study Session presented to the Commission in June 2005. The agenda item may be found at: (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2005-05/2005-05-6A.pdf>).

- 1) **Initial Institutional Approval:** The institution (program sponsor) that has not previously been declared eligible to offer credential preparation programs must submit an application to the Commission for initial institutional approval. The institution prepares a complete program proposal that responds to all preconditions, Common Standards and appropriate Program Standards. The application is reviewed for compliance with the appropriate preconditions (such as regional accreditation [or governing board approval], identification of position responsible for oversight, non-discrimination procedures, completion of a needs assessment, involvement of practitioners in the design of the program, and agreement to provide information to the Commission). Once compliance has been established, the application is brought before the Commission for *initial institutional approval*. This stage determines only an institution's *eligibility* to offer an approved program.
- 2) **Initial Approval of Programs:** Once the Commission acts favorably on institutional approval, the *program* proposal is forwarded to the Committee on Accreditation for action. The program sponsor is required to respond to the appropriate credential program standards for each program the institution wishes to offer. These responses are reviewed by a panel of expert advisors, or in some cases, Commission staff, to determine the sufficiency of the responses. Once it is determined that the program proposal meets the Commission's program standards, the program sponsor is recommended to the Committee on Accreditation for *initial program approval*.

Once granted initial program approval, the institution is given authority to begin the program and will then come under the Commission's continuing accreditation procedures.

Request for Initial Institutional Approval from Santa Clara County Office of Education

Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) has applied to the Commission for initial institutional approval with the intent to operate a county program to prepare individuals for Preliminary Administrative Services Credentials.

The vision of the Santa Clara County Office of Education for the preparation of high quality administrators stems from an extensive history of educational leadership involvement. SCCOE has sponsored programs that enhance and enrich participants as they learn new skills, become creative thinkers, internalize continuous improvement, and develop an in-depth understanding of assessment and evaluation needs. Educational leadership programs and/or services provided by Santa Clara County Office of Education include the California School Leadership Academy (1987-2003), AB 75 Principal Training (2003-2006), AB 430 Principal Training Program (2006-present), Cognitive Coaching (2006-present), SAIT Providership (2003-present), Title 1 Program

Improvement (1995-present), and School Leadership Team Training (1992-present). As a result of this vision and the programs that have been offered, Santa Clara County Office of Education has been a facilitator of a two-level system to assist with the design and implementation of the Leaders in Education Administration Program (LEAP). The two tiers include:

- Level 1: Statewide Collaboration – Counties’ Collaborative Education Leadership Program (CCELP)
- Level 2: Santa Clara County Office of Education – School Leadership Services/Ad Hoc LEAP Team

Level 1: SCCOE has been an integral partner in the statewide group Counties’ Collaborative Educational Leader Program (CCELP) since its inception. This collaborative consists of representatives from the seven counties of Madera, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara and Riverside. The representatives from each county include county assistant superintendents and directors who have an extensive background in leadership. The CCELP is grounded in the concept that leadership is taught as a defined set of skills and attitudes. Its vision is based on the belief that a standards-based, data-driven, equitable future for schools comes from the leadership of well-prepared, knowledgeable, and reflective educators. This vision is embedded throughout the program development as a result of numerous and on-going collaborative meetings.

The mission of the CCELP is *“To build leadership focused on teaching and learning so that each and every student meets or exceeds standards.”* Emphasis is on high priority, underperforming schools and schools that experience high turnover of formal school leaders.

Level 2: This vision is also reflected in an ad hoc steering committee which has guided the development of the Leaders in Education Administration Program. This committee, comprised of program stakeholders from the Santa Clara County Office of Education, representatives from school districts and practitioners from institutes of higher education, is responsible for participating in the design and evaluation of the Leaders in Education Administration Program and acts as a decision-making cadre. Each representative has an extensive background in leadership and in building capacity of the leadership in Santa Clara County and surrounding counties in the region.

Also included are members from the regional California Technology Assistance Project (CTAP) program, Human Resources, and Instructional Service Branch. These members are committed to providing an exemplary Leaders in Education Administration program. Regular meetings ensure that program goals are met.

The core elements of the LEAP curriculum, authored by CCELP, reflect this vision and mission statement. They include a carefully developed curriculum which integrates course work, field experiences and technology. Special attention is placed on rigorous, results-based, interrelated learning experiences. The LEAP is designed for candidates to demonstrate the ability to:

- Facilitate a shared vision of learning
- Build and sustain a positive school culture focused on teaching and learning

- Ensure a safe and effective learning environment
- Create culturally proficient and responsive schools
- Develop professional leadership capacity
- Demonstrate the connection of school success to a larger context

The Commission's Preliminary Administrative Services standards adopted in May 2003 form the foundation for the program. Candidates are informed in the orientation session of the program's mission, learning outcomes, and performance assessments. SCCOE's vision of developing instructional leaders who transform education in their schools shapes the design and delivery of the sequence of courses, field experiences, online and face-to-face interactions as well as frequent opportunities for reflection experienced by each participant. The program is designed to prepare school leaders to confront issues of equity, achievement gaps, scarce resources, hard to staff schools, and underperforming teachers and staff to lead in ways that positively impact teaching and learning, school culture, and community involvement. The program design ties content to field practice in an aligned, coherent, and sequenced pattern to build leadership.

SCCOE has submitted a complete response to the Commission's preconditions and Common Standards. The responses to the preconditions and standards were reviewed by Commission staff and were determined to be appropriate for this first level of review. Commission action to grant initial approval will allow for the completion of the review of the Preliminary Administrative Services program proposal. When the program proposal has met all the adopted standards, the SCCOE program will be forwarded to the Committee on Accreditation for program approval. If granted initial institutional approval and approval for one or more educator preparation programs, SCCOE will be integrated into the Commission's accreditation system.

Recommendation

Based upon a determination that the applicant has met all relevant Preconditions, Common Standards, and requirements, staff recommends that the Commission grant initial institutional approval to Santa Clara County Office of Education.