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Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Update on the Work of the Accreditation Policy and Procedures Task group

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides an update on the work to strengthen and streamline the Commission's Accreditation system. The item reports on several aspects of the work of the Accreditation Processes and Policy Task group.

Policy Question: Does the work to date align with the Commission's expectations?

Recommended Action: That the Commission provide feedback on the work to date and direction for future work.

Presenters: Cheryl Hickey and Catherine Kearney, Administrators, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal

II. Program Quality and Accountability

- a) Develop and maintain rigorous, meaningful, and relevant standards that drive program quality and effectiveness for the preparation of the education workforce and are responsive to the needs of California's diverse student population.

Update on the Work of the Accreditation Policy and Procedures Task group

Introduction

This agenda item presents an update on the work accomplished to date by the Accreditation Policy and Procedures Task Group to strengthen and streamline the Commission's Accreditation System. A prior update was provided at the April 2015 Commission meeting (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2015-02/2015-02-4D.pdf>).

Background

The Accreditation Policy and Procedures Task Group is charged with recommending changes to accreditation policies and procedures based on new standards, assessments and the increased focus on candidate and program outcomes. The group's two co-chairs are Margo Pensavalle, University of Southern California and Committee on Accreditation member, and Cheryl Forbes, University of California, San Diego.

The Task Group has met three times and will meet again after the June 2015 Commission meeting to consider how the recommendations from the other task groups should be incorporated into the accreditation process and procedures as well as to consider Commission discussion and comments on the topics presented herein. The agenda item is divided into several sections addressing processes and procedures for institutions currently in the Commission's accreditation system (sections A, B, C) as well as for institutions seeking eligibility to sponsor educator preparation in California (section D), as outlined below:

- Section A. Strengthening, Updating, and Streamlining the Common Standards
- Section B. Proposed Revisions to the Accreditation Cycle
- Section C. Consideration of an Alternative Accreditation Cycle for Second Tier Programs
- Section D. Strengthening Initial Institutional Approval

A. Strengthening, Updating, and Streamlining the Common Standards

The Commission's Common Standards apply to all institutions approved to offer educator preparation programs leading to a California credential and are intended to ensure the successful implementation of all educator preparation programs offered by an institution. Currently, there are 9 Commission-adopted Common Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/STDS-common.html>). The Common Standards address issues of institutional infrastructure that are common across all types of educator preparation programs.

As part of the effort to strengthen and streamline the accreditation system, the Accreditation Policy and Procedures Task Group reviewed the current Common Standards. The Task Group recommends reducing, reorganizing, and updating the prior nine Common Standards into four

standards. The chart below indicates where the major concepts in the currently adopted standards are proposed for inclusion in the draft proposed Common Standards. It is important to note that Common Standards apply to all educator preparation programs, not just teacher preparation, and therefore some of the language is intentionally broad to encompass all types of educator preparation credential programs.

DRAFT Proposed Common Standards	Adopted Common Standards
1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	1: Educational Leadership 3: Resources 4: Faculty and Instructional Personnel
2: Candidate Recruitment and Support	5: Admission 6: Advice and Assistance 9: Assessment of Candidate Competence
3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	7: Field Experience and Clinical Practice 8: District-Employed Supervisors
4: Continuous Improvement and Program Impact	2: Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation

The draft language for the four proposed Common Standards is presented below.

DRAFT PROPOSED COMMON STANDARDS
<p>Standard 1 – Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation</p> <p>Each Commission-approved institution has the infrastructure in place to operate effective educator preparation programs. Within this overall infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision of teaching and learning that fosters coherence among, and is clearly represented in all educator preparation programs. This vision is consistent with preparing educators for California public schools and the effective implementation of California’s adopted standards and curricular frameworks. • The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders in the organization, coordination, and decision making for all educator preparation programs. • The education unit ensures that faculty and instructional personnel regularly and systematically collaborate with colleagues in P-12 settings, college and university units and members of the broader educational community to improve educator preparation. • The institution provides the unit with sufficient resources for the effective operation of each educator preparation program, including, but not limited to, coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum, professional development/ instruction, field based supervision and clinical experiences.

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- The Unit Leadership has the authority and institutional support required to address the needs of all educator preparation programs and considers the interests of each program within the institution.
- Recruitment and faculty development efforts support hiring and retention of faculty who represent and support diversity.
- The institution employs, assigns and retains only qualified persons to teach courses, provide professional development, and supervise field-based and clinical experiences. Qualifications of faculty and other instructional personnel must include, but are not limited to: a) current knowledge of the content; b) knowledge of the current context of public schooling including the California adopted P-12 content standards, frameworks, and accountability systems; c) knowledge of diversity in society, including diverse abilities, culture, language, ethnicity, and gender orientation; and d) demonstration of effective professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.

Standard 2 – Candidate Recruitment and Support

Candidates are recruited and supported in all educator preparation programs to ensure their success.

- The education unit accepts applicants for its educator preparation programs based on clear criteria that include multiple measures of candidate qualifications.
- The education unit purposefully recruits and admits candidates to diversify the educator pool in California and provides the support, advice, and assistance to promote their successful entry and retention in the profession.
- Appropriate information and personnel are clearly identified and accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of program requirements.
- Evidence regarding progress in meeting competency and performance expectations is consistently used to guide advisement and candidate support efforts. A clearly defined process is in place to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies.

Standard 3 – Fieldwork and Clinical Practice

The unit designs and implements a planned sequence of clinical experiences for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills to educate and support P-12 students in meeting state-adopted content standards. The unit and all programs collaborate with their partners regarding the criteria and selection of clinical personnel, site-based supervisors and school sites, as appropriate to the program.

- Through site-based work and clinical experiences, programs offered by the unit provide candidates with opportunities to both experience issues of diversity that affect school

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climate and to effectively implement research-based strategies for improving teaching and student learning.

- Site-based supervisors must be certified and experienced in teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential.
- The process and criteria result in the selection of site-based supervisors who provide effective and knowledgeable support for candidates.
- Site-based supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.
- All programs effectively implement and evaluate fieldwork and clinical practice.
- For each program the unit offers, candidates have significant experience in California public schools with diverse student populations and the opportunity to work with the range of students identified in the program standards.

Standard 4 – Continuous Improvement and Program Impact

The education unit develops and implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at both the unit level and within each of its programs that identifies program and unit effectiveness and makes appropriate modifications based on findings. The unit assists its programs to collect and analyze data that demonstrate that the programs are having a positive impact on teaching and learning in California public schools.

- Both the unit and its programs regularly and systematically collect, analyze, and use candidate and program completer data as well as data reflecting the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services.
- The continuous improvement process includes multiple sources of data including 1) the extent to which candidates are prepared to enter professional practice; 2) the quality of the educational services provided to students during supervised practice; and 3) feedback from key stakeholders such as employers and community partners about the quality of the preparation.

The Task Group also recommends moving the verification requirement that an institution has a viable recommendation process and monitors that process to a precondition for the institution. Currently this requirement is included in Common Standard 1; however, the Task Force noted that this is something that should be reviewed prior to the site visit.

In order to gather some preliminary information from the field about the draft proposed Common Standards, a stakeholder survey was released on June 5, 2015. While it is recognized that stakeholder feedback on these draft proposed standards will be very limited due to the

limited timeframe for data collection prior to the Commission meeting, the feedback that is received will be summarized orally at the June 2015 Commission meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Staff requests that the Commission discuss these proposed draft standards and provide any appropriate revisions or modifications that staff should make to the language and/or the content of the draft standards. Based on Commission feedback, staff will continue to work with the Task Group as needed, and release the most current version of the document for further stakeholder feedback prior to the Commission’s August 2015 meeting. The draft standards will then be presented for discussion and possible action at that time.

B. Proposed Revisions to the Accreditation Cycle

At the April 2015 Commission meeting the outline of the plan for revisions to the 7-year accreditation cycle was presented (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2015-04/2015-04-4B.pdf>). The Task Group recommends that the Commission continue to maintain a standard seven year accreditation cycle for all institutions, with differentiation based on certain indicators discussed below in this item. Some of the work to refine the specific data and documentation required of each part of the proposed accreditation cycle as well as the specific review process involved remains to be completed, and is dependent on the work of other task groups (e.g., Preliminary Standards, Induction, Outcomes/Surveys, and Data Dashboard). Broadly speaking, some key features of and changes to the accreditation cycle identified by the Task Group thus far would include the following:

- Continue with the expectation that programs review candidate competence and program effectiveness data on an ongoing basis and that these data serve to inform program modifications.
- Program data, analysis, and program modifications would be uploaded annually into the data warehouse.
- Program document review (formerly Program Assessment) would move to Year Five
- Preconditions would be reviewed earlier and more often during the cycle (Year 1 and 4 instead of Year 6)
- Identification of indicators that would initiate greater oversight
- Option to differentiate the length of time between site visits for institutions needing greater oversight
- Distinct accreditation process, aligned with second tier programs
- Stronger reliance on outcomes data (e.g., surveys, TPA and other examinations data)

The chart below represents the proposed revised accreditation cycle.

Accreditation Activity	Year of Cycle						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Institution and all Programs: Submission of Candidate Assessment, Program Effectiveness, Survey and Examinations data, Analysis of Data (formerly Biennial Report). Staff monitors submission and	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Accreditation Activity	Year of Cycle						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
reviews.							
Preconditions: Institutions address preconditions (General and Program) with supporting documentation. Staff reviews.	X			X			
Institutions complete the Program Document Review for all Commission-approved programs (formerly Program Assessment) BIR members review.					X		
Common Standards: Institution submits a response addressing the Common Standards with supporting documentation. BIR members review.					X		
Verification (Site Visit): Institution hosts a site visit. BIR members make decisions on standards and a recommendation on accreditation status to the COA. COA makes the accreditation decision and determines what, if any, follow up is required in Year 7.						X	
Follow Up with COA, as required after the site visit. Staff monitors the follow up. If COA requires, a revisit may take place and members of the BIR would attend.							X

Some of the key differences in the proposed cycle compared to the current cycle are indicated below:

Candidate Assessment and Program Effectiveness Data, Collection, Analysis and Posting – The revised accreditation system would continue the expectation that all programs review candidate competence and program effectiveness data on an ongoing, annual basis and use the data to inform program modifications. The new system, however, would require that the data be posted annually through an electronic platform (such as the data warehouse, the institution’s accreditation website, or another online tool, yet to be determined). Further, these data would include additional and common sources of data such as results of surveys and aggregated examinations results. The Task Group needs further discussion on the specificities around the process for the review of the data. At minimum though, the Commission staff would review annually the data in the data warehouse such as the survey data and examinations results. In addition, all available data would be part of the BIR member review in Year 5 and the site visit in Year 6.

Preconditions – Under the current accreditation system, preconditions are reviewed once during the 7 year cycle – in Year 6 as part of the site visit. The Task Group expressed concern about the infrequency with which the Commission reviews preconditions, given the fact that these are foundational in nature and often grounded in state statute, regulations, and Commission policy. The Task Group argued that one of the primary responsibilities of the Commission is to ensure that institutions are complying with state statutes, regulations and policies and that too many changes can occur at an institution and within programs over a 7 year period that could cause an institution to fall out of compliance at any point in time. To better ensure compliance, the Task Group recommended that an additional review be added

during the 7 year cycle. Because the review of preconditions is not a matter of requiring professional judgments or qualitative determination about quality issues, it is a staff function and does not require the Commission to use reviewers. The Task Group argued that adding one additional precondition review in the cycle would not place an undue burden on Commission staff, while producing a greater level of confidence that all institutions were in compliance with the preconditions.

Common Standards and Program Documentation Review – Currently, these processes occur in different years – program review at the document level in Year 4, confirming that the standards are effectively implemented as part of the site visit in Year 6, and Common Standards as part of the site visit process in Year 6. The separation of these two functions has created unintended consequences, including the need for an unsustainable number of document reviewers, a lack of coherence in the review process, and confusion with respect to programmatic changes that take place in the intervening years between the document review and the site visit when program effectiveness is judged. Merging these two functions in the same year, to be conducted by the same reviewers, a portion of whom will make up the site visit team, should enhance the reviewers’ understanding of the institution and all its programs, thus streamlining the process, and alleviating the need for such large numbers of reviewers. The Task Group is proposing to significantly revise the amount and type of documentation and data that are submitted and reviewed during the documentation review (see below).

In addition, moving the program review closer to the site visit will lessen the need to account for a large number of programmatic changes that take place in a program between a review of the documentation and the site visit. Further, the Task Force is recommending the elimination of a limitless number of resubmissions. Submissions of documents would be limited to one original submission followed by one response to the reviewers’ comments that would be reviewed by the site visit team.

Verification of Effectiveness (Site Visit) – Under the proposed plan, the site visits remain a critical part of the structure in the new cycle. All institutions would host an accreditation site visit review in the 6th year of the cycle. Additional discussion is required with respect to specific changes to the structure and focus of the site visit. The site visits could vary in focus, duration, and structure depending on the data that have been submitted. There has been discussion that smaller teams could be sent to institutions that have adhered to all accreditation requirements and have submitted data that show the program(s) are effectively preparing educators. Conversely, if an institution’s documentation does not support the quality and effectiveness of the programs offered, and/or if the documentation is consistently submitted late to the Commission, the site visit could be longer or even moved to an earlier year.

Follow Up – Under the proposed new cycle, Year 7 remains critical for ensuring that institutions address issues of concern identified by the review team. When making an accreditation decision, the COA places stipulations and/or additional reporting requirements that must be addressed in the 7th year. About half of the institutions have some type of follow up action required by the COA and all institutions need the year to reflect on what was learned from the

site visit and to implement improvements based on the information. At this point, the Task Force is not proposing any additional changes to Year 7.

Other Proposed Changes to the Accreditation Cycle and Activities

The following issues are also being proposed for modified activities in the revised accreditation cycle. The Task Group plans to continue its discussion on these items when it next meets.

1. *Include Accreditation History in the Reports to COA* – Both the COA and the Task Group suggest that the recent accreditation history of an institution should be available in the accreditation report to the COA. They suggest that the site visit report template include the findings from the last accreditation review to ensure that any issues identified in the prior review have not reoccurred.
2. *Strengthen Expectations Regarding Candidate Competence and Program Effectiveness Data* (Currently the Biennial Report Process). Over the past 5-10 years, the accreditation system has focused much attention on ensuring that institutions collect, analyze and use data for program improvement. The Task Group has discussed ways to strengthen the use of data to not only inform program modifications, but to play a greater role in determining program quality.

The Task Group revised the Biennial Report Template to include four required data tables: two focused on candidate competency (this must include TPA data for MS/SS programs), one focused on candidate competency in fieldwork, and one focused on program effectiveness. Currently, education units submit reports for each program and a unit summary every two years. Once the Data Warehouse becomes operational, data and analysis would be updated annually.

It is anticipated that as data from multiple surveys become available the Program Effectiveness data expectations will expand to include the survey data from each responding constituency.

3. *Significantly Revise the Type and Amount of Documentation and Data Needed to Ensure “On Paper” Alignment with Program Standards* (Currently the Program Assessment Process)
Because identifying the documentation that will be needed to ensure alignment with the program standards is highly dependent on the specific language of the standards, this work will necessarily continue. However, some of the recommendations for changing the process include the following:
 - ✓ Strictly limit the amount of narrative allowed in responding to standards
 - ✓ Use an electronic submission template that is integrated with the data warehouse
 - ✓ Require certain data be provided about the program (most likely housed in the data warehouse) such as delivery mode (on line, face to face, hybrid), enrollment, and locations offered.
 - ✓ Require the submission of course descriptions and sequence

- ✓ Require an alignment matrix that identifies where competencies (e.g., BTPEs, CPSEL) are a) taught, b) practiced, and c) mastered/assessed
 - ✓ Require links in the matrix to the syllabi, assessments and rubrics
 - ✓ Specify tables and charts that must be used in place of narrative (e.g., organizational chart, enrollment and completion information)
 - ✓ Require the submission of specified outcomes data (e.g., employer survey results, candidate survey results, examinations data)
 - ✓ Limit document review process to one review, plus one opportunity for the institution to respond. The response would not be reviewed prior to the site visit, but provided to the site visit team for confirmation during the site visit.
4. *Institute a Substantive Change Process.* Currently an institution may make any changes to a program so long as the changes are still in alignment with standards and there is notification in the biennial report. The institution and its Commission-approved programs are responsible for monitoring the changes and ensuring that the changes are in alignment with the adopted standards. Sometimes these changes are significant. Currently, the Commission does not review or approve the changes, even if they are significant in scope. Concerns have been raised that the institution may no longer be operating a program that bears any similarity to the program that was reviewed and approved. For instance, a program offered face to face at one time may be changed to one that is offered entirely online. Under the current system, the institution would notify the Commission in its Biennial Report and follow up would take place during the program assessment and site visit processes. The Task Group suggests that the Commission consider implementing a substantive change process to ensure that major changes are in alignment with standards prior to those changes taking place.
5. *Differentiate Activities for Institutions Needing Greater Oversight or Assistance*
 The Task Group has identified potential indicators or flags such that if an institution or a program's activities include one or more of the indicators during the 7-year cycle there might be a need for greater oversight of the institution. Indicators might include the following:
- Negative survey data, unexplained outliers or survey data that is significantly discrepant across the constituencies surveyed
 - Significant complaints (note: Commission staff responds to and monitors complaints)
 - Non-compliance with accreditation requirements
 - Data suggesting one or more programs may not be meeting standards
 - Significant program or leadership changes
6. *Allow for More Frequency of Monitoring, If Necessary.* The findings of a site visit team could result in the COA determining that the next site visit for the institution should take place sooner than 7 years. The COA could place stipulations on the institution that results in the institution hosting its next site visit within a shorter span of time, or after stipulations have been resolved. For example, an institution in the Indigo cohort, having completed a site visit

in 2014-15, would not expect another visit until 2021-22 (7 years); however, the COA could determine that the institution should have a site visit in 3 years, in which case the institution would be moved to the Orange Cohort, which is due for a site visit in 2018-19. In addition to shortening the site visit timeframe, reassigning the accreditation cohort would also ensure that the program documents would be updated (Year 5 in cycle-2017-18 for Orange) and that data analysis would also be current.

7. *Revise the Standard Findings to Recognize Excellence.* The determination that an institution or a program would be designated “exemplary” needs additional discussion, particularly as the CSU-led pilot effort continues. The Task Group does recommend, however, that the accreditation decisions on standards be modified to acknowledge when an institution has implemented a particular standard in an exemplary manner. This would require revising standard findings from met, met with concerns, and not met, to add another category such as “exceeds standard.” In addition, the Task Group recommends adopting rubrics that would ensure consistency in the application of these categories. The Task Group also encourages staff to find ways to acknowledge those institutions that meet all standards on their initial visit.

Several key operational matters are necessary to still be discussed and determined, such as specifying how the reviews of the data would take place, the role of COA in the review of the data, and other similar issues. Staff will continue to work with the Task Group on refining the process once the Commission has had opportunity to comment on the more general objectives described in this item.

C. Consideration of an Alternative Accreditation Cycle for Second Tier Programs

There are approximately 160 Commission-approved teacher induction programs and with the implementation of new Clear Administrative Services Induction program standards, a growing number of administrator induction programs. Second tier preparation programs are those programs primarily focused on mentoring candidates once they have earned a preliminary credential and entered the profession. The majority of second tier programs are offered by local education agencies. General Education Induction, Clear Education Specialist Induction, and Administrative Services Clear Induction, are all Second Tier credential programs.

Because induction programs lead to a Clear credential, induction programs were integrated into the Commission’s accreditation system in 2010-11, thus resulting in a significantly increased accreditation workload. At the time of the integration into the accreditation system, a statewide infrastructure existed for teacher induction programs that included Cluster Regional Directors who were instrumental in assisting the Commission with accreditation activities for induction programs. These resources are no longer available and questions have been raised about the appropriateness of the current accreditation system and activities for teacher induction programs as well as about the capacity of the Commission to maintain the existing system with a large, and growing, number of second tier programs.

Given that the Commission is responsible for ensuring that all educator preparation programs are meeting standards, the Accreditation Task Group discussed whether and in what ways the accreditation process might be adjusted for these programs. Input was also provided by the Induction Task Group. Although Commission capacity was a consideration in discussing options for the Second Tier process, the Task Group focused on the nature of these programs - specifically, the fact that the majority of these programs are sponsored by entities in the public school system, the relationship required between mentor and candidate, the focus on measuring candidate growth, and the expectation of implementation of skills in a job-embedded program within the school setting.

The Task Group also considered the particular settings in which these programs are offered. Although the majority of programs are sponsored by school districts and county offices of education, these programs may also be sponsored by colleges, universities, and other entities. In some cases, an institution may sponsor only one or two Second Tier programs; however, these programs are also offered at institutions that sponsor preliminary educator preparation programs as well.

Given the input from the task groups, staff proposes to retain the seven-year cycle for Second Tier programs but with some distinct differences. As with Preliminary programs, all Second Tier programs would collect and post data and analysis on an annual basis. The submission and staff review of preconditions and staff review of program data and analysis would occur twice in the cycle, in Years One and Four, and the Program Document review would occur in Year Five as would be expected of all programs. Verification would continue to occur in Year Six. However, staff proposes that not all induction programs be required to host an in-person site visit. Those programs that meet certain criteria would be allowed to host a visit virtually, that is, a more limited number of interviews would be conducted and they would be done through electronic means. A decision would be made in advance about which constituencies from the institution would need to be interviewed. It is anticipated that many induction programs would not require an in-person site visit.

Under this proposal, the cycle for second tier programs would be as follows:

Second Tier Accreditation Activity	Year of Cycle						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Data Posting and Analysis (formerly Biennial Report) Examples of possible required data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate/SP Match including Frequency and Duration • Enrollment/Recommendation Data • Survey Data: Employers, Candidates, Completers, Support Providers • Candidate Observation Data (Currently BR Data Table 3) Unit Lead Summary (Part B)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Preconditions: Institutions address preconditions (General and Program) with supporting documentation. Staff reviews Preconditions	X			X			

Second Tier Accreditation Activity	Year of Cycle						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Common Standards: Institution submits a response addressing the Common Standards with supporting documentation. BIR members review.					X		
Program Document Review (formerly Program Assessment) BIR members review. Examples of possible required documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Description Resource Exhibits (budget, personnel, etc.) Organization Chart including Dean or Cabinet Level Authority Delivery (online, in-person, hybrid) Other unique features (e.g. consortium) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matrix comparing Standards/Competencies to Opportunities to Learn (Introduced, Practiced, Mastered) • Learning Activity Sequence • School-based Mentor/Candidate Experiences Mentor Qualifications Mentor Training Assessment • Program Changes 					X		
Verification (Site Visit – In Person or Virtual) Institution hosts a site visit-Verification. BIR members make decisions on standards and a recommendation on accreditation status to the COA. COA makes the accreditation decision and determines what, if any, follow up is required in Year 7.						X	
Follow Up with COA, as required after the site visit. Staff monitors the follow up. If COA requires, a revisit may take place and members of the BIR would attend.							X

The Induction Task Group also expressed an interest to return to some level of peer review as part of the accreditation process. As a result, the Second Tier accreditation cycle may include allowing an optional appendix with peer review findings during program document review. This would not replace the required elements of Program Review but may serve to provide further information to the Board of Institutional Review Team.

Determining the Format for the Verification (On Site or Virtual) - Under this plan, the Institutional Review Team would be selected in Year Five. The Team would review program documents, common standards documents and outcomes data and make preliminary findings, including a recommendation about the nature of the Year Six Verification (site visit), i.e., whether the documentation and data indicate that a virtual visit is sufficient or whether an in-person visit is recommended. In either case, there would be an assigned consultant from the Commission, a team lead and team members from the BIR. The institution would still be responsible to demonstrate during the Verification year that it is meeting all common and program standards. The chart below is a summary of the proposed criteria that would guide the decision about whether the second tier program would participate in a virtual visit or an in

person on-site visit. Staff suggests that the discussion about what the appropriate indicators are should be continued with both the Task Group and the COA.

Virtual Verification (Site Visit)	In-Person Verification (Site Visit)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey data are within the norm or positive compared with the state • No significant complaints have been received • Comply with accreditation activities • Program Document review (Year 5) yields determination that all or almost all standards are preliminarily aligned • No significant changes to leadership or program have occurred • Low enrollment (i.e., less than 15 candidates) 	<p>Programs with one or more indicators would host an in-person site visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey data are not within the norm, negative compared with the state • Significant complaints have been received • Non-compliance w/accreditation activities • Data and review of standards indicate possible issues with meeting standards • Significant program or leadership changes

Once a decision is made about the format for the verification, the institution would be notified and a subset of the team that reviewed the documentation would be assigned to the site visit team. In the case of a virtual verification, the results of the preliminary findings of the review team, including a review of data, would determine the constituencies that would need to be interviewed via technology. In most virtual verification cases, it may not be necessary to interview all constituencies as is done currently. For instance, if the program completer survey results have a high yield and are very positive, it may not be necessary to talk to many, or any, candidates or completers.

D. Strengthening Initial Institutional Approval

Education Code Section 44372 (c) sets forth the Commission’s responsibility to rule on the eligibility of an applicant for accreditation when the applying institution has not previously prepared educators for state certification in California. In recent years, an increasing number of providers have sought, and gained, approval by the Commission to offer educator preparation programs in California. Currently, there are 253 Commission approved program sponsors in California.

The Commission routinely fields a number of inquiries from out of state institutions, charter organizations, school districts, California institutions of higher education, as well as other entities regarding approval to offer one or more educator preparation programs in California. This trend is likely to continue as more institutions take advantage of technological advances to offer online programs and reach broader audiences across state borders.

While all institutions are held to the same standards for initial institutional approval, there has been concern that the Commission’s requirements: a) are less than sufficient for purposes of initial institutional approval; b) limit the ability of the Commission to deny initial institutional

approval; and 3) do not provide sufficient follow up with institutions new to operating an educator preparation program in California in those first few years of operation.

To address these issues, the Accreditation Processes and Policy Task Group recommends strengthening the requirements for initial institutional approval. The Task Group recommends the following actions for the Commission:

- 1) *Adopt a policy in which new institutions that have met the Commission's specified criteria are initially awarded a "provisional approval status."*

Currently, once an institution is approved by the Commission, it joins the accreditation system as any other institution. One of the concerns raised about this process is that the documentation to be submitted for initial institutional approval is essentially a plan and that plan has not yet been implemented. With no history of operating an educator preparation program in California, the Commission relies on assurances that the institution will comply with all Commission policies, regulations, and processes. Previous efforts to conduct technical assistance visits to the new institution during their initial implementation have been effective in assuring their understanding of the accreditation system requirements and timelines, but with the scope of the accreditation system and the agency's fiscal constraints technical assistance site visits have not taken place for the past three years.

The Accreditation Policy and Process group suggest that the new institution be allowed to operate initially with provisional approval, with permanent status as a Commission-approved institution being granted only after evidence is provided assuring the institution is in fact operating in alignment with all Commission policies, standards, and regulations. The Task Group recommends that the provisional timeframe be adequate for the first group of candidates to complete the program (usually 2-3 years, in accordance with the program design), thereby allowing for data to be collected to determine the institution's effectiveness in educator preparation. Only after the determination that the institution is operating effective educator preparation programs would the Commission grant full institutional approval.

As envisioned, the process would generally be as follows:

- a) Institution applies for initial institutional approval and submits proposals that address the Common Standards, Preconditions, and Program Standards for the proposed program(s). The proposals would be accompanied by supporting documentation.
- b) Members of the BIR review the proposal against the standards (Common and Program); staff reviews the response to the Preconditions.
- c) Once the proposal is deemed to be aligned with the Commission standards and in compliance with the Preconditions, the proposal would move forward to the Commission for consideration of provisional approval for a specified period of time.
- d) Once provisional institutional approval is granted, the institution would operate for a period of 2-3 years, after which the institution must submit specified data and documentation about program implementation. These data would include but not be

limited to candidate enrollment, competency, and completion data, information on partnerships, survey data, and any changes in program implementation.

- e) This information is presented to the Commission for the determination of institutional approval and participation in the accreditation system.

2) *Require Additional Information be Submitted to Inform the Commission’s Decision about the Likelihood of the Institution Offering Effective Educator Preparation Program(s).*

a) *Experience and Effectiveness in Offering Educator Preparation Programs*

Institutions that seek initial accreditation may have a history of offering educator preparation programs in other states, or they may have no prior experience. The Commission’s current preconditions do not require that institutions have prior experience and the Task Group is not recommending that this be a requirement. However, the Task Group recommends that information be required from institutions seeking initial institutional approval regarding their prior history in operating effective preparation programs or that the institution should declare that it does not have a prior history. Regardless of prior status, the institution would be required to provide data that either supports its prior effectiveness of operating educational programs in general or the likelihood that even though it does not have prior experience it would offer an effective program to students. In particular, the task group suggests requiring institutions seeking initial institutional approval to identify whether or not the institution has previously sponsored an educator preparation program leading to licensure, or participated as a partner in any educator preparation programs and/or programs focused on K-12 public education and provide history related to that experience. Collecting this information from institutions interested in offering educator preparation in California would provide the Commission with more information than it currently receives upon which to make its decision.

b) *Require Additional Relevant Data in the Application Packet*

Additional data and/or information could be required to inform the Commission’s decision for initial institutional approval to offer educator preparation. These data sources might differ depending on the type of program for which the provider is seeking approval. Data could include the institution’s student loan default rate, transferability of academic units, prior regional or out-of-state accreditation history, or retention and completion rates in other related programs when educator preparation data are not available.

c) *Require additional information to demonstrate that the institution has the capacity and the resources to support the educator preparation programs.*

While this is required in a response to the Common Standards—it is only a plan for new institutions. The task group recommends clarifying and specifying that the application for initial institutional approval must include the submission of a plan, including evidence such as a budget, assigned personnel, and the identification of

other resources to sustain the institution and its educator preparation program(s) during the development years.

3) *Strengthen the Precondition Requiring Demonstration of Need*

The current program-specific precondition includes a requirement that the institution provide evidence that there is a demonstration of need for the specific program in the region in which it will operate. Evidence in the past has included one or more letters by school administrators that attest to the fact that they would consider hiring candidates who complete the program for positions within their district. The Task Group suggests that the evidence required be expanded to include:

- a) a statement from the institution clearly describing the purpose of establishing the proposed programs at the current time and in the proposed location
- b) the projected number of candidates who are expected to be enrolled in the program for the first three years of operation
- c) a needs analysis that includes information on other programs within the area in which the program plans to operate (geographic region or target area for online programs)
- d) a declaration of need from employers verifying that there is indeed a projected need for credential holders by districts in that region or target area.

4) *Require Participation in a Commission sponsored "Accreditation 101" professional learning event by a Team representing the Institution seeking Initial Institutional Approval Prior to Submitting an Application.*

The Task Group noted that it does not believe the commitment, requirements and expectations for sponsoring educator preparation in California are clearly understood by all of those who seek initial institutional approval. Modeling its suggestion on a WASC requirement, the group recommends that prior to accepting an application for initial institutional approval, the Commission require that the institution send a team to a training that outlines what is expected of institutions, including information about the accreditation cycle, applicable program standards, annual accreditation fees, and other expectations for Commission-approved institutions that sponsor educator preparation in California. The Task Group recommends that required participants include the unit head, the fiscal officer, the program director or directors for the proposed programs, and a partner employing organization or educational entity, as appropriate. Due to the need for a functioning unit, for the ability to collaborate with required school and district partners, and for a clear understanding of fiscal issues related to establishing and sustaining educator preparation programs in California, a team rather than an individual would need to participate in the Accreditation 101 training. The Task Group felt strongly that the participation of a team in this technical assistance activity would increase the likelihood that the institution will understand and fully participate in the accreditation system and successfully implement educator preparation programs.

Status of Current Applications for Initial Institutional Approval

The Commission has received proposals including supporting documentation from 6 prospective new sponsors including 4 charter schools, 1 private out of state institution of higher

education, and 1 school district. Additionally, the Commission has received 4 *Intent to Submit* forms for new sponsors, including 2 more charter schools and 2 school districts. For these latter four entities, no documents have yet been received by the Commission. The Commission may wish to consider a moratorium on initial institutional approval, placing a hold on accepting, reviewing and recommending additional initial institutional approvals until the new process and related *Accreditation Framework* have been adopted by the Commission.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the following:

- 1) That the draft Common Standards be revised to incorporate Commission input, staff work with the Task Group to incorporate the Commission's suggestions, and staff be directed to submit the draft revised Common Standards for additional field review.
- 2) That the Commission provide feedback and, if appropriate, approve in concept the recommended changes to the Initial Institutional Approval process and direct staff to update the *Accreditation Framework* for future adoption by the Commission.
- 3) That the Commission act to place a moratorium on additional Initial Institutional Approvals until a new process and related *Accreditation Framework* have been adopted.
- 4) That the Commission provide feedback on and, if appropriate, approve in concept the general direction of the proposed Accreditation Cycle.
- 5) That the Commission approve in concept the general direction for the proposed accreditation cycle of activities for Second Tier preparation programs.