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# 3G

## Information

### *Educator Preparation Committee*

#### **Draft Special Education Induction Program Standards**

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item brings proposed revised draft education specialist induction program standards and the field response to the proposed standards.

**Policy Question:** Do the draft standards meet the Commission's expectations for special education induction programs?

**Recommended Action:** For information only

**Presenters:** Sarah Solari and Karen Sacramento, Consultants, 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.

September 2016

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# Draft Special Education Induction Program Standards

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## Introduction

This agenda item brings draft special education Induction Program Standards for the Commission's review and consideration. Since the adoption of the general education Induction Program Preconditions and Program Standards in December of 2015, programs offering induction to education specialist credential holders have advocated for changes to the education specialist induction program standards so that the teacher induction programs they offer can be aligned. The Commission may review, revise and/or adopt the draft standards. Work described in this agenda item derives from the Commission's ongoing efforts to strengthen and streamline the Accreditation System specific to general education induction and proposes similar work for special education Induction.

## Background

As part of the Commission's work to strengthen and streamline the Accreditation System, the Induction Task Group was charged to work with staff to review and revise the General Education Induction and Clear Credential Program Standards and regulations governing Induction, and to make recommendations to the Commission for consideration and possible action. The Task Group work on Induction preconditions and standards commenced with the Commission directive that the accreditation system should reduce the emphasis on program inputs and increase the focus on program outcomes - what candidates know and are able to do at the completion of a preparation program. As a result of the Task Group's work the Induction Program Standards are candidate centered, contextually dependent, and outcome rich. The Commission at its December 2015 meeting adopted the proposed Induction Standards and Preconditions for general education induction programs.

The revised Program Standards and Preconditions included a reoriented focus on candidate outcomes (i.e. program outputs) balanced with program inputs into the system. The Induction and the Clear Credential program standards focus on the Induction experience to promote new teacher professional growth and development as specified in the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* as the key intended outcome of induction. As general education induction programs transition to the new induction standards and preconditions, many programs that offer induction for both general education and special education teachers have noted that their teacher induction programs are not aligned since the special education teachers participating in induction are held to the Clear Education Specialist Induction program standards which are different from the newly adopted general education induction standards. The field has asked, "As the general education induction programs move to the new induction standards, is it necessary to have special education induction candidates still working with the existing program input based standards or can special education induction transition to an outcome based program as general education induction has?"

To gather information in response to the above question, staff developed an electronic survey to gather specific information from the field regarding the special education Induction Program Standards. This survey was designed to collect information regarding each general education induction standard and precondition and to determine its appropriateness and applicability to special education induction programs and candidates. This survey was opened to the public on July 22, 2016 and will remain open through September 15, 2016. As of August 25, 2016, over 183 responses have been collected.

The following two sections provide the work of the Induction Task Group that is being considered for application to special education Induction programs.

### **Preconditions for Induction Programs**

Preconditions are the prerequisite requirements that must be met in order for an accrediting association or licensing agency to consider accrediting a program sponsor or approving its programs or schools. Preconditions may include “yes” or “no” issues and/or requirements that can be agreed upon as either being in place or not rather than issues of program quality.

The Task Group viewed this set of Preconditions as foundational to allowing an LEA or IHE to offer an Induction program. The Commission adopted the revised preconditions listed below in December of 2015.

### **Adopted Preconditions for General Education Induction Programs**

1. Each Induction program must be designed to provide a two-year, individualized, job-embedded system of mentoring, support and professional learning that begins in the teacher’s first year of teaching.
2. The Induction program must identify and assign a mentor to each participating teacher within the first 30 days of the participant’s enrollment in the program, matching the mentor and participating teacher according to grade level and/or subject area, as appropriate to the participant’s employment.
3. Each Induction program must assure that each participating teacher receives an average of not less than one hour per week of individualized support/mentoring coordinated and/or provided by the mentor.
4. Goals for each participating teacher must be developed within the context of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) within the first 60 days of the teacher’s enrollment in the program.
5. The Individual Learning Plan must be designed and implemented solely for the professional growth and development of the participating teacher and not for evaluation for employment purposes.
6. An Induction program sponsor must make available and must advise participants of an Early Completion option for “experienced and exceptional” candidates who meet the program’s established criteria.

In the revised accreditation system's seven year cycle, all institutions sponsoring an Induction program would submit a response to the Preconditions in years one and four and host an accreditation site visit in year six. Each program is required to meet the Preconditions as a condition of sponsoring a Commission-approved General Education Induction Program.

### **Analysis of Proposed Special Education Induction Preconditions**

Based upon an analysis of initial feedback regarding the preconditions and their applicability to special education induction, a modification has been suggested that would provide clarification with respect to assigning a mentor to a participating teacher. This modification would address a concern that was addressed by multiple responders regarding the requirement of a mentor to hold an education specialist credential. The suggested modification to Precondition 2 could be as follows:

The Induction program must identify and assign a mentor to each participating teacher within the first 30 days of the participant's enrollment in the program, matching the mentor and participating teacher according to [credentials held](#), grade level and/or subject area, as appropriate to the participant's employment.

Another precondition that received several comments with respect to its appropriateness is Precondition 6 which provides direction about the availability of an Early Completion option to candidates. Staff recommends that although there is no legislative requirement for special education teachers to have an Early Completion Option, this precondition is appropriate for special education induction as it allows for experienced and exceptional candidates to participate in an expedited route to meet the induction program requirements.

### **Induction Program Standards**

The Task Group reframed the standards to primarily focus on mentor based guidance and support which allow for both deep reflection on developing teaching practice and the immediate support that is necessary for any new teacher. It is the focus on mentoring and supporting new teachers that suggests that the general education induction program standards might be appropriate for special education teacher induction programs as well.

### **Induction Program Design for Mentoring Clear Teaching Credential Candidates**

#### **Standard 1: Program Purpose**

Each Induction program must support candidate development and growth in the profession by designing and implementing a robust mentoring system, as described in the following standards, that helps each candidate work to meet the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*.

#### **Standard 2: Components of the Mentoring Design**

The Induction program's mentoring design must be based on a sound rationale informed by theory and research, and must provide multiple opportunities for candidates to demonstrate growth in the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*. The mentoring approach implemented by the program must include the development of an Individualized

Learning Plan (ILP) for candidates based on needs determined by the teacher, site administrator, and program provider. The ILP must address identified candidate competencies that support the recommendation for the credential. Mentoring support for candidates must include both “just in time” and longer term analysis of teaching practice to help candidates develop enduring professional skills. The program’s design features both individually and as a whole must serve to strengthen the candidate’s professional practice and contribute to the candidate’s future retention in the profession.

### **Standard 3: Designing and Implementing Individual Learning Plans within the Mentoring System**

The Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) must address the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* and provide the road map for candidates’ Induction work during their time in the program along with guidance for the mentor in providing support. The ILP must be collaboratively developed at the beginning of Induction by the candidate and the mentor, with input from the employer regarding the candidate’s job assignment, and guidance from the program staff. The ILP must include candidate professional growth goals, a description of how the candidate will work to meet those goals, defined and measurable outcomes for the candidate, and planned opportunities to reflect on progress and modify the ILP as needed. The candidate’s specific teaching assignment should provide the appropriate context for the development of the overall ILP; however, the candidate and the mentor may add additional goals based on the candidate’s professional interests such as, for example, advanced certifications, additional content area literacy, and early childhood education. Within the ILP, professional learning and support opportunities must be identified for each candidate to practice and refine effective teaching practices for all students through focused cycles of inquiry.

The program must assist the candidate and the mentor with assuring the availability of resources necessary to accomplish the ILP. The program must ensure dedicated time for regular mentor and candidate interactions, observations of colleagues and peers by the candidate, and other activities contained in the ILP. In addition, the mentoring process must support each candidate’s consistent practice of reflection on the effectiveness of instruction, analysis of student and other outcomes data, and the use of these data to further inform the repeated cycle of planning and instruction. Within the ongoing mentoring interactions, the mentor must encourage and assist candidates to connect with and become part of the larger professional learning community within the profession.

### **Standard 4: Qualifications, Selection and Training of Mentors**

The Induction program assigns qualified mentors and provides guidance and clear expectations for the mentoring experience based on the program’s design. Qualifications for mentors must include but are not limited to:

- Knowledge of the context and the content area of the candidate’s teaching assignment
- Demonstrated commitment to professional learning and collaboration
- Possession of a Clear Teaching Credential

- Ability, willingness, and flexibility to meet candidate needs for support
- Minimum of three years of effective teaching experience

Guidance and clear expectations for the mentoring experience provided by the program must include but are not limited to:

- Providing “just in time” support for candidates, in accordance with the ILP, along with longer-term guidance to promote enduring professional skills
- Facilitation of candidate growth and development through modeling, guided reflection on practice, and feedback on classroom instruction
- Connecting candidates with available resources to support their professional growth and accomplishment of the ILP
- Periodically reviewing the ILP with candidates and making adjustments as needed

The program must provide ongoing training and support for mentors that includes, but is not limited to:

- Coaching and mentoring
- Goal setting
- Use of appropriate mentoring instruments
- Best practices in adult learning
- Support for individual mentoring challenges, reflection on mentoring practice, and opportunities to engage with mentoring peers in professional learning networks
- Program processes designed to support candidate growth and effectiveness

### **Standard 5: Determining Candidate Competence for the Clear Credential Recommendation**

The Induction program must assess candidate progress towards mastery of the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* to support the recommendation for the clear credential. The documentation of candidate progress must reflect the learning and professional growth goals indicated within the Individualized Learning Plan and evidence of the candidate’s successful completion of the activities outlined in the ILP.

Prior to recommending a candidate for a Clear Credential, the Induction program sponsor must verify that the candidate has satisfactorily completed all program activities and requirements, and that the program has documented the basis on which the recommendation for the clear credential is made. The program sponsor’s verification must be based on a review of observed and documented evidence, collaboratively assembled by the candidate, the mentor and/or other colleagues, according to the program’s design. The Induction program’s recommendation verification process must include a defensible process of reviewing documentation, a written appeal process for candidates, and a procedure for candidates to repeat portions of the program, as needed.

### **Standard 6: Program Responsibilities for Assuring Quality of Program Services**

The program must regularly assess the quality of services provided by mentors to candidates, using criteria that include candidate feedback, the quality and perceived

effectiveness of support provided to candidates in implementing their Individualized Learning Plan, and the opportunity to complete the full range of program requirements. Induction program leaders must provide formative feedback to mentors on their work, including establishment of collaborative relationships. Clear procedures must be in place for the reassignment of mentors, if the pairing of candidate and mentor is not effective.

The program must provide a coherent overall system of support through the collaboration, communication and coordination between candidates, mentors, school and district administrators, and all members of the Induction system.

These induction standards support job embedded Induction, which by definition, supports the new teacher in his or her classroom, given his or her assignment at a school and within a district.

### **Analysis of Proposed Program Standards Feedback**

An analysis of the feedback specific to the general education Induction Program Standards and their applicability to special education induction revealed that there is a need to augment the list of professional growth that is currently in Induction Standard 3 to include the knowledge, skills, and abilities specific to the Education Specialist credential. The proposed modification to Induction Standard 3 could be as follows:

The Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) must address the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* and provide the road map for candidates' Induction work during their time in the program along with guidance for the mentor in providing support. The ILP must be collaboratively developed at the beginning of Induction by the candidate and the mentor, with input from the employer regarding the candidate's job assignment, and guidance from the program staff. The ILP must include candidate professional growth goals, a description of how the candidate will work to meet those goals, defined and measurable outcomes for the candidate, and planned opportunities to reflect on progress and modify the ILP as needed. The candidate's specific teaching assignment should provide the appropriate context for the development of the overall ILP; however, the candidate and the mentor may add additional goals based on the candidate's professional interests such as, for example, advanced certifications, additional content area literacy, early childhood education, [case management, evidence-based practices supportive of specific disabilities within the candidate's caseload, consultation and collaboration, co-teaching, and collaborating with para-educators and service providers](#). Within the ILP, professional learning and support opportunities must be identified for each candidate to practice and refine effective teaching practices for all students through focused cycles of inquiry.

The program must assist the candidate and the mentor with assuring the availability of resources necessary to accomplish the ILP. The program must ensure dedicated time for regular mentor and candidate interactions, observations of colleagues and peers by the candidate, and other activities contained in the ILP. In addition, the mentoring process must support each candidate's consistent practice of reflection on the effectiveness of instruction, analysis of student and other outcomes data, and the use of these data to further inform the repeated cycle of planning and instruction. Within the ongoing mentoring interactions, the mentor must encourage and assist candidates to connect with and become part of the larger professional learning community within the profession.

### **Summary of Proposed Special Education Induction Preconditions and Program Standards Feedback**

The responses to the survey have been overwhelmingly supportive for the concept of parallel standards for general education induction and special education induction. A majority of the approved special education induction programs also offer general education induction programs and the proposed alignment of the standards makes perfect sense. One comment from a stakeholder stated:

I love the alignment of the two sets of standards. I'd like to see them be as close as possible to allow for our programs to run alongside one another. There is great benefit to having our Ed Spec teachers interact with and share Induction work with their Gen Ed colleagues (and vice versa). The more we separate the standards, the more likely it will be that we have to run two separate sets of Advice and Assistance meetings, etc. It is so worthwhile to keep these teachers together and have them learn from one another. Their individualized learning plans will give them the specific context they need in their jobs.

Of primary concern to the field, but not under the purview of the Commission, is the lack of qualified mentors to assist with the implementation of induction.

### **Issues for Commission Consideration**

Staff requests that the Commission review the Preconditions and Program Standards and discuss the appropriateness and applicability of these standards to special education induction programs and their candidates. Staff suggests that with minor modifications to the general education induction preconditions and standards, the standards could be applicable to both general and special education induction programs. Staff plans to continue to gather feedback for the purpose of developing an action item for the next Commission meeting.

### **Next Steps**

If the Commission agrees with proposed concepts, staff will work to develop one set of Induction standards and preconditions that will apply to both general education and special education induction programs for possible adoption in October 2016.