

# Discussion and Possible Revision of the Definition of “Professional Placement” January 2011

## Overview of this Report

This agenda item presents, from the Common Standards Glossary, the definition of the term *professional placement* for COA discussion and possible revision.

## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the COA adopt a proposed revised definition of the term *professional placement* for use beginning with the Spring 2011 accreditation site visits.

## Background

The Commission’s Common Standards were updated in 2008 and while the updated standards were being finalized, the COA worked to develop definitions of key terms in the Common Standards. The definitions are compiled in the Common Standards Glossary (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educatorprep/standards/CommonStandardsTeacherPrep.pdf>).

The Common Standards Glossary is used by faculty and staff at institutions that offer educator preparation programs in California, Commission staff, and members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR). The Glossary has provided a common language for the important concepts in the Common Standards. For example, the K-12 professionals which guide candidates in student teaching or internships are identified in programs by a variety of terms: master teachers, consulting teachers, supervising teachers, mentors, resident teachers, and directing teachers. In the Common Standards Glossary the K-12 professionals are identified as *District-Employed Supervisors*. The definition of a District-Employed Supervisor clarifies that the individual is a field supervisor who is employed or based in the K-12 school or district and monitors the candidate.

At the June 2010 BIR training the participants were discussing standard findings for the Common Standards during the site visit simulation and a rich discussion developed around Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance and the term *professional placement* which is found in the standard. Common Standard 6 is presented below:

### **Standard 6: Advice and Assistance**

Qualified members of the *unit* are assigned and available to advise applicants and *candidates* about their academic, professional and personal development, and to assist each *candidate’s professional placement*. Appropriate information is accessible to guide each *candidate’s* attainment of all program requirements. The *institution* and/or *unit* provide *support* and assistance to *candidates* and only retains *candidates* who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession. Evidence regarding *candidate* progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance efforts.

The trainers described the ‘professional placement’ as the position the candidate will be eligible for once the educator preparation program is completed. Then participants in the June 2010 BIR training pointed out that in the Common Standard Glossary the term *professional placement* is defined as “A classroom, clinical or field experience that a candidate participates in during the preparation program. A school site is often a candidate’s assigned location for field experiences.”

The Glossary definition for professional placement is very broad and addresses the full range of field experiences in which credential candidates participate during the educator preparation program. This includes the official student teaching (or intern) placement. Approved programs are responsible for selecting the school sites for student teaching based on specified criteria. Therefore the program does more than “assist each candidate’s professional placement” if professional placement includes student teaching.

In talking with long term members of the BIR and Dr. Birch, the consensus expressed was that historically the term *professional placement* referred to the position the candidate will apply for and be eligible for once the approved educator preparation program has been completed. Therefore, staff has developed some proposed language for the term *professional placement*.

### **Proposed definition of *Professional Placement***

The position that the candidate will be eligible for once the educator preparation program has been completed. In Second Tier credential programs, the individual may or may not already have a professional placement.

### **Next Steps**

If the COA adopts a revised definition of *professional placement*, staff will update the Common Standards Glossary. In addition, staff will ensure that all accreditation team members understand the revised definition during the spring 2011 site visits.