# Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of the Accreditation Visit for Professional Preparation Programs at Stanislaus County Office of Education

**June 24, 2010**
**Overview of this Report**

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This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at Stanislaus County Office of Education. The report of the team presents the findings based upon reading the Institutional Self- Study Reports, review of supporting documentation and interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, the following accreditation recommendation is made for the institution: **Accreditation**.

**Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions**
**For all Programs offered by the Institution**

| | Met | Met with Concerns | Not Met |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) Educational Leadership | X | | |
| 2) Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation | X | | |
| 3) Resources | X | | |
| 4) Faculty and Instructional Personnel | X | | |
| 5) Admission | X | | |
| 6) Advice and Assistance | X | | |
| 7) Field Experience and Clinical Practice | X | | |
| 8) District Employed Supervisors | X | | |
| 9) Assessment of Candidate Competence | X | | |

**Program Standards**

| | Total Program Standards | Program Standards | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Met | Met with Concerns | Not Met |
| Education Specialist: MM Level I | 17 | X | | |
| Education Specialist: MM Level II | 12 | X | | |
| Education Specialist: MS Level I | 19 | X | | |
| Education Specialist: MS Level II | 11 | X | | |

**California Commission on Teacher Credentialing**
**Committee on Accreditation**
**Accreditation Team Report**

**Institution:** **Stanislaus County Office of Education**

**Dates of Site Visit:** **May 4 -7, 2010**

**Accreditation Team Recommendation:** **Accreditation**

**Rationale:**
The unanimous recommendation of "Accreditation" was based on a thorough review of the institutional self-study; additional supporting documents available during the visit; interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, graduates, and local school personnel; along with additional information requested from program leadership during the visit. The team felt that it obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgments about the professional education unit's operation. The decision pertaining to the accreditation status of the institution was based upon the following:

Common Standards
The team reviewed each of the Common Standards and determined that each standard was met.

Program Standards
The team reviewed each of the Program Standards and determined that each standard was met.

Overall Recommendation
The team completed a thorough review of program documentation, evidence provided at the site, additional information provided by program administration and faculty, and interviews with candidates, program completers, faculty, administrators, employers and other stakeholders. Based upon this review the team unanimously recommends a decision of **Accreditation**.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to recommend candidates for the following Credentials:

Education Specialist (Levels I & II)
Mild/Moderate Disabilities
Moderate/Severe Disabilities

Staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.
- Stanislaus County Office of Education be permitted to propose new credential programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- Stanislaus County Office of Education continue in its assigned cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

## CTC Accreditation Team

**Team Leader:** **Dee (Margaret) Parker**
California State University, Dominguez Hills

**Common Standards Cluster:** **David Simmons**
Ventura County Office of Education

**Programs Cluster:** **Pat Sheehan**
Orange County Department of Education

**Staff to the Visit** **Catherine Creeggan,** Consultant

### Documents Reviewed

Institutional Self Study
Biennial Report & CTC Feedback
Course Syllabi
Candidate Files
Intern Handbook
Faculty Handbook
Practicum Handbook
Follow-up Survey Results
Needs Analysis Results
Field Experience Notebooks
Schedule of Classes
Advisement Documents
Faculty Vitae/Resumes
Recruitment Materials & Newsletter
SEI Faculty Meeting Minutes
Candidate Portfolios
Common Standards Appendices
SCOE Website
Program Assessment Document

### Interviews Conducted

| | Team Leader | Common Standards | Teaching Cluster | **TOTAL** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Program Faculty | 6 | 6 | 5 | **17** |
| Institutional Administration | 7 | 6 | 2 | **15** |
| Candidates | 9 | 23 | 14 | **46** |
| Graduates | 3 | 4 | 3 | **10** |
| Employers of Graduates | 2 | 3 | 6 | **11** |
| Supervising Practitioners | 2 | 3 | 4 | **9** |
| Advisors | 2 | 0 | 1 | **3** |
| School Administrators | 3 | 3 | 5 | **11** |
| Credential Analysts and Staff | 2 | 2 | 0 | **4** |
| Advisory Committee | 6 | 2 | 0 | **8** |
| Staff | 7 | 6 | 0 | **13** |
| | | | **TOTAL** | **147** |

*Note: In some cases, individuals were interviewed by more than one cluster (especially faculty) because of multiple roles. Thus, the number of interviews conducted exceeds the actual number of individuals interviewed.*

## Background information

The Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE), through effective leadership, coordinated services, staff development, and partnerships among family, school and community, supports public education in preparing culturally diverse students to become productive citizens and life-long learners.

SCOE partners with local schools and the community to support quality education for the nearly 106,000 students in Stanislaus County and several thousand more in regional programs throughout the state. The office employs approximately 900 and manages a budget of $236 million. Through its Learning to Teach Continuum in the Instructional Support Services Division, SCOE supports a BTSA program and a Special Education "District" Intern (SEI) Program. The SEI program offers an alternative certification pathway for individuals who want to earn a Clear Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe Education Specialist Credential with EL Authorization while teaching full time. An Assistant Superintendent oversees all credential programs, including the BTSA and the Education Specialist programs.

**Education Unit**

The Special Education Intern (SEI) Program was created in 2003 to meet the critical shortage of special education teachers in the Stanislaus area. The district intern program is similar to a traditional university internship in that the intern is both a full time teacher and full time student. In a district intern program, the school district employs and delivers the teacher preparation program. The Special Education Intern (SEI) Program applies the concept of the district internship to a multiple county consortium model with Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) providing a comprehensive teacher preparation program. The Special Education Intern (SEI) Program Coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe Education Specialist programs.

Intern candidates complete Level I and Level II Education Specialist requirements in three years and are then recommended for a Level II/Clear Education Specialist credential. It should be noted that program is in the process of transitioning from the Level I - Level II standards to the new Preliminary - Clear Education Specialist credential. The program follows a cohort model which creates a support system for the candidates. Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe candidates have their own cohorts. A new cohort for each authorization begins in the fall of every year.

All teacher preparation coursework and field supervision are provided by SCOE while the participating districts provide peer coach support. The program currently partners with 21 school districts in Stanislaus and surrounding counties.

The Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) was approved to offer an Education Specialist Mild/Moderate District Intern Program and began its first cohort in the winter of 2004 with four candidates. SCOE was subsequently approved to offer the Moderate/Severe authorization and began the first cohort in fall 2007 with 6 candidates. This current year there are 30 Mild/Moderate candidates and twelve Moderate/Severe candidates enrolled in the program. As of June 2009 a total of 40 Mild/Moderate candidates had completed the program. Of those, four were recommended for both authorizations. The first cohort of Moderate/Severe candidates will complete the program in June, 2010.

The SEI faculty is made up of 25 instructors and practicum supervisors who serve in a part-time capacity. SCOE initiates a part-time professional agreement with each individual to provide

instructional or supervisory services to intern candidates. Several faculty members are retired administrators or teachers while others are currently employed in the field of general or special education as teachers, principals or program specialists.

**Table 1**
**Program Review Status**

| Bin<br>Program Name | Program Level (Initial or Advanced) | Number of program completers (2008-09) | Number of Candidates Enrolled or Admitted | Agency or Association Reviewing Programs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education Specialist<br>Mild/Moderate | Initial & Advanced | 15 | 30 | CCTC |
| Education Specialist<br>Moderate/Severe | Initial & Advanced | * | 12 | |

**First cohort of Moderate/Severe candidates began in fall 2007 and has not yet completed the three year program*

## The Visit

The visit began at noon on Tuesday, May 4, 2010, and was completed on Friday, May 7, 2010, at noon. The team members first convened at the hotel for an orientation to the visit. The team was then transported to the Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) for a reception where they met the SCOE leadership, program stakeholders, administrators, and program completers. The reception also included a PowerPoint presentation to provide team members with a broad view of SCOE and its programs. Team members conducted informal interviews with institutional leadership, partner administrators, faculty, stakeholders, and candidates during the reception. The team then held an evening meeting at the hotel to review the timeline for the visit, discuss the materials provided by the institution, and draft interview questions. On Wednesday and Thursday, the team conducted interviews, studied institution and program documents, and conferred with each other periodically. Thursday morning, the program administrators were presented with a Mid-Visit Report to inform them of the status of the visit to that point and to request additional documentation for review by members of the team. Thursday evening the team reached consensus on all standard findings and on the accreditation recommendation. The exit report was presented to program administrators at the Stanislaus County Office of Education at 11:00 AM**,** May 7, 2010, after a briefing was provided to SCOE administrators. There were no unusual circumstances affecting this visit.

# Common Standards

**Standard 1: Educational Leadership** **Standard Met**

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| The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision for educator preparation that is responsive to California's adopted standards and curriculum frameworks. The vision provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance and experiences, scholarship, service, collaboration, and unit accountability. The faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders are actively involved in the organization, coordination, and governance of all professional preparation programs. Unit leadership has the authority and institutional support needed to create effective strategies to achieve the needs of all programs and represents the interests of each program within the institution. The education unit implements and monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements. |

The two credential preparation programs of the Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) are under the full authority of the County Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Support Services (ISS) maintains oversight of both programs. Interviews with cabinet-level county office administrators clearly indicate that a research-based vision is fundamental to all SCOE operations. Program leadership has clearly identified the need to represent the interests of the credential program in the institution's operational plans. As per program documents and interviews with program and institutional leadership, the program's managers are included as fully participating team members. Evidence from documents and interviews with institutional and program leadership indicates that the Superintendent's priorities are established to provide a framework for administration to accomplish his stated mission: support local districts and their students and staff in a manner responsive to California's adopted standards and curriculum frameworks.

A review of program documents, including handbooks, syllabi, and portfolios indicate that all courses offered by the unit are intended to provide candidates the necessary knowledge, skills and practice to develop and mature in their role as teacher. The vision directs courses to ensure that candidates are steeped in their subject matter, utilize a variety of appropriate learning strategies, possess the skills to create optimal learning environments for students and recognize the need for continuous growth and self-improvement. Using Bruner's model of spiraling coursework, the program is structured to support its candidates, as novice teachers, in both research-based and practical ways over a thoughtfully designed three-year sequence to address the learning needs of candidates. Syllabi, course documents, and interviews indicate that interns receive collaboratively chosen initial content that is both urgently needed and developmentally appropriate. As the candidate matures in professional practice, application of acquired knowledge and skills is expected. Summative and formative assessments, based upon the theories of Black & William, evidence evaluation of the candidate's maturing practice and competency. Handbooks and teaching materials, for candidates and faculty, recognize the unique learning needs of adults according to the theories of Knowles and Mezirow. Interviews with faculty and candidates indicate that the cohort learning model, as described by Barnett et al, successfully engages intern candidates in issues from multiple perspectives and provides opportunity for all to contribute. Interviews and training materials indicate that all candidates additionally receive "just-in-time" support throughout the program.

Evidence from documents and interviews with program and institutional leadership indicates that the unit's programs are designed and organized with involvement of faculty members, many of whom, in addition to their instructional role in the program, administer schools and various

student programs within the service area. Moreover, ongoing collaboration occurs continuously with all stakeholders, defining policy, providing leadership, and coordinating the procedures and resources that ensure the quality of candidates. Evidence from documents, e.g., Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Co-sponsor Sheets, and interviews with relevant stakeholders indicate active involvement in the organization, coordination, and governance to ensure program quality. Unit leadership regularly attends bimonthly meetings of various groups within the service area including the Human Resources Directors and Curriculum and Project Directors. Program leadership uses these venues to advocate for unit needs and elicit feedback for unit accountability.

The Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Support Services (ISS) maintains oversight of the unit. A county office administrator, directly supervised and evaluated by the Assistant Superintendent of ISS, manages the day-to-day operation of the Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe Special Education district intern programs. That administrator is responsible for scheduling classes, creating contracts for teaching faculty and practicum supervisors, recruiting interns, communicating with districts, attending State-level meetings, completing Commission reports, and other such duties.

Program documents and interviews with staff indicate that program leadership and the county's credential analysts work collaboratively to procure appropriate certificates and credentials. The education unit has established agreements with county credential analysts to prepare for the completion of intern and the Level II credential applications. Evidence from candidate files clearly indicates that each program implements and monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements. Local employers and program candidates consistently rated these processes as clear and efficient.

**Standard 2: Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation** **Standard Met**

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| The education unit implements an assessment and evaluation system for ongoing program and unit evaluation and improvement. The system collects, analyzes, and utilizes data on candidate and program completer performance and unit operations. Assessment in all programs includes ongoing and comprehensive data collection related to candidate qualifications, proficiencies, and competence, as well as program effectiveness, and is used for improvement purposes. |

Interviews with program and institutional leadership, corroborated by program documentation and stakeholder interviews, provide clear evidence that each program's evaluation system includes ongoing and comprehensive data collection related to candidate qualifications, proficiencies, and competence, as well as program effectiveness, and is used for improvement purposes. Interviews with program and institutional leadership indicate a clear and ongoing commitment to unit-wide assessment and evaluation for program planning, ensuring that stakeholders have the opportunity to review data and collaboratively provide suggestions for program improvement.

Ongoing collaboration occurs continuously with all stakeholders, allowing ongoing program and unit evaluation to ensure the quality of candidates. Evidence from documents, e.g., candidate and employer surveys, and interviews with relevant stakeholders indicate active involvement in systematic evaluation to ensure program quality. Unit leadership regularly attends bimonthly meetings of various groups within the service area including the Human Resources Directors and

Curriculum and Project Directors. Program leadership uses these venues to elicit formal and informal feedback for unit accountability and improvement.

The unit collects, analyzes, and utilizes data from both formative and summative assessments of candidate performance throughout the programs to determine quality of program design and implementation. The primary assessments utilized to determine candidate competence are: California Standards for the Teaching Profession Description of Practice matrix; Competency Record level 1 and 2; Learning Portfolio and Portfolio Evaluation Rubric; Site Administrator Assessment of Intern Candidate; and RICA® Passing Results. Interviews with faculty and field supervisors highlight the importance of training to calibrate assessments for candidate evaluation. A system of portfolio review by a panel of program faculty and field supervisors is in place. Candidates are assessed against competency-based rubrics. Assessment data is analyzed to design program changes, faculty and site supervisor development, and greater support for candidates.

**Standard 3: Resources** **Standard Met**

The institution provides the unit with the necessary budget, qualified personnel, adequate facilities and other resources to prepare candidates effectively to meet the state-adopted standards for educator preparation. Sufficient resources are consistently allocated for effective operation of each credential or certificate program for coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum and professional development, instruction, field-based supervision and/or clinical experiences, and assessment management. Sufficient information resources and related personnel are available to meet program and candidate needs. A process that is inclusive of all programs is in place to determine resource needs.

Interviews with cabinet-level county office administrators, corroborated by budgetary documents and interviews with candidates, staff and external stakeholders, clearly indicate that that credential preparation programs are allocated adequate resources for their effective operation. SCOE also provides access to technology support, janitorial support and security officers during program activities. Moreover, a collaborative process that is inclusive of both programs is in place to determine resource needs. Allocations of resources are distributed between the programs after input from stakeholders, faculty, and staff. Quarterly faculty meetings and weekly staff meetings are used to elicit feedback regarding resource needs. Unit leadership regularly attends bimonthly meetings of various groups within the service area including the Human Resources Directors and Curriculum and Project Directors. Program expenses are met through a combination of: general funds; tuition; partner-allocated in-kind resources; application fees; and categorical funds. Even in this most difficult of fiscal years, the County Superintendent has protected these scarce categorical dollars.

Because county services include a wide variety of staff development and technical assistance to ensure compliance with the Education Code and federal law, each credential program has access to an economy of scale sufficient to enable the unit to prepare candidates effectively to meet the state-adopted standards for educator preparation. Credential programs have become integral parts of various county services. Consequently, sufficient resources are consistently allocated to each program for candidate application advisement and consultation; professional development instruction, and field-based supervision; and program coordination, assessment management, and tuition recovery. Moreover, faculty and staff receive initial and ongoing training and support in current trends, initiatives and resources to ensure they receive timely and research-based information to best support the needs of their candidates.

Evidence from documents corroborated by interviews with program faculty, staff, candidates, and employers indicates that sufficient information resources and related personnel are available to meet program and candidate needs. Most partnering employers pay the peer coaches stipends. While universities provide some materials for the courses, programs and instructors also make available supplementary materials, e.g., current case studies, contemporary case law, and ongoing legislative changes. The program maintains a compressive library of classic texts to keep materials costs low. The program also budgets relatively large sums for the purchase of materials (binders and copies of state-adopted standards specific to the coursework) and printing to publish and package the supplemental materials.

**Standard 4: Faculty and Instructional Personnel** **Standard Met**

Qualified persons are employed and assigned to teach all courses, to provide professional development, and to supervise field-based and/or clinical experiences in each credential and certificate program. Instructional personnel and faculty have current knowledge in the content they teach, understand the context of public schooling, and model best professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service. They are reflective of a diverse society and knowledgeable about diverse abilities, cultural, language, ethnic and gender diversity. They have a thorough grasp of the academic standards, frameworks, and accountability systems that drive the curriculum of public schools. They collaborate regularly and systematically with colleagues in P-12 settings/college/university units and members of the broader, professional community to improve teaching, candidate learning, and educator preparation. The institution provides support for faculty development. The unit regularly evaluates the performance of course instructors and field supervisors, recognizes excellence, and retains only those who are consistently effective.

Evidence from program and personnel documents, including resumes and job descriptions, corroborated by interviews with local employers, as well as unit and institutional leadership, indicate that well-qualified and highly credible persons are assigned to teach courses, provide supervision, and advise candidates across programs. The majority of faculty members have advanced degrees and all are appropriately licensed. Interviews with current program participants and completers indicate that program faculty members are student-centered, exemplify best practices, and are accommodating of candidate needs within the standards of a Commission-approved program.

Interviews with candidates, completers, program staff, and community stakeholders provide clear evidence that faculty have a thorough grasp of the academic standards, frameworks, and accountability systems that drive the curriculum of public schools. Moreover, they have current knowledge in the content they teach and understand the context of public schooling. One candidate shared, “My field supervisor is the one who hired my boss—she knows what the district wants.” Another queried rhetorically, “Who’s better prepared to teach a Special Education law course than a SELPA director?” Interviews with local employers indicate that unit leadership regularly provides service and support to local school districts in their efforts to improve student achievement. Most faculty members, in addition to their instructional role in the SEI programs, currently hold P-22 positions as school administrators, service providers, or teachers. In these capacities, they provide direct services to students and professional development to school personnel. This allows frequent communication and collaboration among relevant stakeholders in addressing ongoing programmatic issues, as well as in planning and implementing programmatic changes.

Evidence from employment documents and faculty vitae, corroborated by interviews with program and institutional leadership, indicate that faculty come with diverse backgrounds; have

experience in varied school settings including elementary, middle, and high, as well as settings inclusive of mildly, moderately and severely disabled students in a variety of least restrictive environments. Additionally, they have experience working with socio-economically and linguistically diverse populations. Interviews with candidates, completers, program staff, and community stakeholders provide clear evidence that faculty demonstrates knowledge of cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity. Faculty members represent diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Of special note, they include instructors who are adult members of disabled communities themselves. Interviews with candidates indicate that this provides a unique perspective into the needs of disabled students which is imparted to the candidates.

Evidence from documents and interviews with program and institutional leadership indicates that faculty collaborates regularly and systematically with colleagues in P-22 settings, and members of the broader, professional community to improve teaching, candidate learning, and educator preparation. This is corroborated by interviews with a variety of stakeholders, e.g., faculty, district administration, and non-public school staff.

Evidence from documents, corroborated by interviews with program leadership, faculty, candidates, and staff, indicates that the institution provides considerable support for faculty development. Thoughtful effort goes into ensuring a cohesive, spiraled, and coordinated program. SEI faculty members receive initial training and ongoing professional development consistent with their assigned responsibilities. Collaborative planning time ensures instructional consistency; while calibration of assessors ensures inter-rater reliability during candidate evaluations.

Furthermore, evidence from documents, corroborated by interviews with program leadership, faculty, and staff, indicates that the institution evaluates the performance of instructors, field supervisors, and peer coaches at least annually and retains only those who are consistently effective. Candidate competency assessment data is analyzed to design program changes, faculty and site supervisor development, and greater support for candidates. Program employees consistently report that they consider themselves valued members of the team and are proud to be associated with SEI.

**Standard 5: Admission** **Standard Met**

In each professional preparation program, applicants are admitted on the basis of well-defined admission criteria and procedures, including all Commission-adopted requirements. Multiple measures are used in an admission process that encourages and supports applicants from diverse populations. The unit determines that admitted candidates have appropriate pre-professional experiences and personal characteristics, including sensitivity to California's diverse population, effective communication skills, basic academic skills, and prior experiences that suggest a strong potential for professional effectiveness.

Interviews with program leadership, faculty, candidates, and staff along with supporting documentation clearly indicate that, in each professional preparation program, applicants are admitted on the basis of well-defined and publicized criteria, including all Commission-adopted requirements. Specifically, potential candidates must: hold a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum GPA of 2.0; meet the Basic Skills Requirement (BSR) by passing a Commission-approved examination; demonstrate subject matter competency by having a prior teaching credential, or subject matter waiver from an approved institution or pass the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET); have 160 hours of pre-service in the areas of child development, classroom management, general pedagogy, English learner

pedagogy and special education; meet US Constitution requirement; and have been hired as the Teacher of Record for a special education designated classroom by a sponsoring school district. Additionally, the program coordinator conducts a one-to-one intake session with each potential candidate to establish whether that candidate possesses such traits as sensitivity to California's diverse population, communication skills, academic skills, and prior experiences that suggest a strong potential for effectiveness as a professional educator. Interviews with local employers provide evidence that the institution's admissions process generally identifies candidates who demonstrate a strong potential for professional accomplishment. Furthermore, the strong collaboration between local employers and the county office allows for placement of the most appropriate candidate at a particular site given that candidate's unique characteristics. Consequently, stakeholders report that program completers are sought after for their knowledge, expertise, compassion, and professionalism.

Multiple measures used in the admission processes encourage and support applicants from these diverse populations. As per SCOE established guidelines, each candidate's employer must sign an MOU assuring that the partnering employer prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, race, sex, perceived or actual sexual orientation, marital status, handicap, national origin, creed, arrest or conviction record, or any other reason prohibited by state or federal law. Employers and employees affiliated with these programs are required to comply with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments and the ADA Act of 1990.

**Standard 6: Advice and Assistance** **Standard Met**

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 retain 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.

Interviews with candidates, completers, program faculty and staff, and local employers provide clear evidence that candidates are well-advised. Advisors are knowledgeable about credential requirements, and candidates' questions and concerns are addressed in a timely and responsive manner. Program requirements are outlined for candidates in writing as part of the application process. Face-to-face group advisements and orientations are provided at frequent intervals. Extensive information regarding programs and the complexities of Commission-adopted requirements is available at the SCOE website. Moreover, district-level credential technicians provide one-on-one advisement reiterating Commission-adopted requirements. Interviews with local employers provide evidence that the strong collaboration between local employers and the county office facilitates an appropriate professional placement, given the candidate's qualifications.

Interviews across stakeholder groups substantiate the efforts of program faculty and staff, as well as unit leadership, to support individual candidates as they endeavor to meet program requirements. Monitoring of goals, assignments, and portfolios occurs throughout the program. Instructors give on-going feedback in person and via email. Candidates, whose progress or performance is deemed unsatisfactory, are notified and assistance is provided to enable those candidates to succeed. Candidates may have to repeat program activities in order to demonstrate competence. After receiving appropriate assistance, candidates whose progress or performance

remains unsatisfactory are dropped from the program. Unsuccessful candidates may also lose employment and consequently fail to complete credential requirements.

Interviews with faculty and field supervisors, corroborated by minutes from faculty meetings, highlight the importance of program assessments to program management. Consequently, assessment data is analyzed to guide program changes, inform faculty and site supervisor development, and provide greater support for candidates.

**Standard 7: Field Experience and Clinical Practice** **Standard Met**

The unit and its partners design, implement, and regularly evaluate a planned sequence of field-based and clinical experiences in order for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support all students effectively so that P-12 students meet state-adopted academic standards. For each credential and certificate program, the unit collaborates with its partners regarding the criteria for selection of school sites, effective clinical personnel, and site-based supervising personnel. Field-based work and/or clinical experiences provide candidates opportunities to understand and address issues of diversity that affect school climate, teaching, and learning, and to help candidates develop research-based strategies for improving student learning.

Interviews with intuitional leadership, unit management, and local employers provide clear evidence that the program's design provides a well-planned and fully implemented sequence of field-based experiences consistent with the institution's research-based vision. Evidence from documents, e.g., candidate and employer surveys, and interviews with relevant stakeholders, indicates active involvement in systematic evaluation to ensure candidates develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support their K-12 students to meet state-adopted academic standards.

Interviews with local employers provide evidence that the strong collaboration between local employers and the county office facilitates an appropriate professional placement, given the candidate's qualifications. Consequently, stakeholders report that program candidates and completers are recruited for their knowledge, expertise, compassion, and professionalism, as well as their program-provided support. Evidence from program and personnel documents, including resumes and job descriptions, corroborated by interviews with local employers, as well as unit and institutional leadership, indicate that well-qualified and locally respected persons are assigned to provide supervision across programs. All field supervisors have advanced degrees and are appropriately licensed as per commission-adopted pre-conditions and program-designed requirements. Interviews with current program participants and completers indicate that field supervisors are student-centered, exemplify best practices, and are accommodating of candidate needs within the confines of a Commission-approved program.

Interviews with program leadership, faculty, and candidates clearly indicate that, in both programs, required field-based work provides candidates ample experience with issues of diversity that affect school climate, teaching, and learning, and provides opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills required by the program. Field placement in conjunction with spiraled coursework enables candidates to apply an increasingly complex and refined repertoire of research-based strategies for improving learning among all students in their classrooms.

**Standard 8: District-Employed Supervisors** **Standard Met**

District-employed supervisors are certified and experienced in either teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential. A process for selecting supervisors who are knowledgeable and supportive of the academic content standards for students is based on identified criteria. Supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.

Program documentation indicates that SCOE peer coaches are experienced education specialists. Most have advanced degrees and are appropriately licensed as per commission-adopted pre-conditions and program-designed requirements. Interviews with current program participants and completers indicate that peer coaches are helpful, skilled practitioners.

Program handbooks and memoranda-of-understanding, corroborated by interviews of various stakeholder groups, document the process for selecting appropriate peer coaches. Potential peer coaches are chosen by the partner-district using the program's criteria. Specifically, potential peer coaches need: effective communication skills; three years successful teaching experience in special education; demonstrated successful experiences in observing teachers/coaching/mentoring; knowledge of state-adopted academic standards and student performance standards; strong recommendation from their administrator and peers; high evaluations of their teaching performance; good understanding of the school and community; a reflective practice; and to hold a special education credential.

The unit provides programmatic orientation and peer coaches' training to prepare individuals selected by their districts for a non-evaluative, mentoring role. Peer coaches receive annual certificates acknowledging their contributions. Each partner compensates and evaluates peer coaches according to its policies and procedures. Candidates assess peer coaches through an annual survey. The program uses the results of the survey to evaluate peer coach performance. In addition, each Human Resources director receives bi-monthly reports which indicate the completion of contact logs by peer coaches, as well as the completion of administrator assessments of intern candidates.

**Standard 9: Assessment of Candidate Competence** **Standard Met**

Candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting the state-adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission-adopted competency requirements, as specified in the program standards.

Evidence from interviews with candidates, completers, faculty, supervisors, coaches, and program administrators indicates that courses and activities are designed to teach the knowledge, skills, and abilities to educate and support P-22 students in meeting state-adopted academic standards. Additionally, this evidence indicates that through coursework, fieldwork, observations, and portfolio assessments the program assures that candidates demonstrate the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting the state-adopted academic standards.

The unit collects, analyzes, and utilizes data from both formative and summative assessments of candidate performance throughout the programs to determine candidate competence. Interviews with local employers, faculty and field supervisors, corroborated by review of a random sample of assessments from candidate and completer files, indicate that SCOE Education Specialist

Interns meet the Commission-adopted competency requirements, as specified in the program standards. The primary assessments utilized to determine candidate competence are: California Standards for the Teaching Profession Description of Practice matrix; Competency Record level 1 and 2; Learning Portfolio and Portfolio Evaluation Rubric; Site Administrator Assessment of Intern Candidate; and RICA® Passing Results.

## Education Specialist Credential Programs
## Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe (Levels I and II)

### Program Design

Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) and a consortium of local school districts sponsor two intern programs for individuals wishing to complete a Mild/Moderate and/or Moderate/Severe Education Specialist Credential while teaching full time in an appropriate position. Interviews with cabinet-level county office administrators clearly indicate that institutional leadership has clearly identified the need to represent the interests of the credential program in the institution's operational plans. A county office administrator, directly supervised and evaluated by an Assistant Superintendent, manages the day-to-day operation of the Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe Special Education district intern programs. That administrator is responsible for scheduling classes, creating contracts for teaching faculty and practicum supervisors, recruiting interns, providing one-on-one advisement of prospective candidates, communicating with employers, attending State-level meetings, and completing Commission reports.

The Special Education Intern (SEI) Program is structured as a district intern program with the working teacher in mind. This alternative certification pathway is designed to develop practical and reflective special educators. Foundational skills and knowledge are first provided to the interns. The course sequence in conjunction with field placement provides spiraled content that enables candidates to apply an increasingly complex and refined repertoire of research-based strategies for improving learning among all students in their classrooms. Early courses prepare the candidates to provide students with a free and appropriate public education, to design legally defensible Individual Education Programs (IEPs), to establish systems of positive behavior supports, and to ensure students with educational benefit in the least restrictive environment. Later courses focus on curriculum and instruction that are specific to particular content areas. Candidates attend teacher preparation classes twice a week in the first two years and once a week in the third year. Employment experiences provide practicum assignments in which intern candidates apply course content.

SCOE recognizes the unique learning needs of adults incorporating the theories of Knowles and Mezirow. Program leadership believes that a program for interns should differ fundamentally from a traditional teacher preparation program. Program design reflects the intern's pressing and immediate need for fundamental information. Interns have a unique opportunity to utilize their teaching assignment to turn theory into practice and simultaneously fulfill course expectations and assignments. Courses provide the opportunity to explore the issues of their placement and receive advice and suggestions. The program provides needed practical support since as teacher of record interns are expected to fulfill the same duties as a fully credentialed and experienced teacher.

Through representation at the Learning to Teach Council meetings, program leadership and employers ensure that mutual goals are furthered by the program. Shared goals focus on creating appropriate learning environments and thereby promoting student acquisition of the K-12 content standards. Additionally, program leadership regularly attends bimonthly meetings of various groups within the service area including the Human Resources Directors and Curriculum and Project Directors. Program leadership uses these venues to advocate for unit needs and elicit feedback for unit accountability.

Additionally, the program makes changes based on candidate feedback. While Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe candidates are enrolled together in foundational courses, initial candidates reported that coursework was not sufficiently differentiated according to the authorization. The program has made considerable strides in making the course/practicum assignments more authorization specific, i.e., Mild/Moderate candidates receive Mild/Moderate assignments and Moderate/Severe candidates receive Moderate/Severe assignments.

As with all Education Specialist programs, the SEI Program is in the process of transitioning to the new program standards and the concomitant changes to California's Education Specialist credential structure.

**Curriculum**

Stakeholders report that because of the quality of this program's preparation, candidates and completers are recruited for their exceptional knowledge and expertise. Research-based learning theory guides the development of coursework and fieldwork within the program. The sequence of coursework is organized on a spiral, creating opportunities for interns to reinforce skills and knowledge that are essential to effective professional practice. Interns examine and evaluate a wide variety of approaches to teaching in the content areas according to the student standards. Fieldwork/practicum experiences provide opportunities for candidates to observe, apply, and evaluate educational theories and pedagogical principles. As coursework and fieldwork occur concurrently for interns, activities are interwoven through both, allowing the interns multiple opportunities to apply theory to practice.

Preparation to teach English learners is spiraled throughout the curriculum beginning with 40 hours of the 160-hour pre-service requirement. Topics include: planning for instruction of English Learners based on the students' levels of proficiency and literacy in English and primary language as assessed by multiple measures such as the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), the California Standards Test (CST), and local assessments; specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE); implementation of English Language Development (ELD), i.e., grade-level academic language instruction, ELD by proficiency level, and content-based ELD.

Program completers report that the cohort design builds a long-term, collegial relationship of trust, learning, and reflection among cohort members. A spectrum of disabilities, levels of language proficiencies, and student ages are found among cohort members' placements. This provides the opportunity to address the specific needs of the various age groups, including phonemic awareness, social conversations, dating and sexual behaviors of young adults.

**Field Experience**

Interviews with institutional leadership, unit management, and local employers provide clear evidence that the program's design provides a well-planned and fully implemented sequence of field-based experiences consistent with the institution's research-based vision. Interns are supported and guided throughout their field experience by a practicum supervisor, peer coach, and site administrator. To ensure the transference of learning from coursework to practice, practicum supervisors and course faculty meet quarterly to discuss and calibrate expectations. These team meetings are designed to ensure the alignment of theory to practice. The program assigns the practicum supervisor to the intern throughout his or her experience. The school district assigns a non-evaluative peer coach who also assists the intern throughout the field

experience. These individuals assist the intern to develop as a reflective practitioner connecting theory and research to classroom application.

Practicum supervisors observe interns in their classrooms approximately 23 times during their Level I internship. Candidates are observed in their field experience setting by trained practicum supervisors, thirteen times during Year One, and approximately ten times during Year Two. During classroom observations, practicum supervisors observe candidates in a variety of settings across multiple curriculum areas utilizing both informal and formal assessment tools. After the practicum supervisor has observed a candidate's teaching, they meet for the purpose of debriefing and goal setting. Areas of growth based upon the CSTP and in terms of Category I, II and III Standards are addressed. The supervisor reviews specifics about the candidate's practice and makes recommendations to the candidate in order to improve classroom instruction. Depending on the candidate's individual needs, current coursework, and progress in the SEI Program, practicum supervisors use multiple observation strategies and techniques. Observation checklists are used by the practicum supervisor. Non-confidential information is shared with appropriate personnel to support the intern.

In addition to regular post-observation conferences, candidates meet with their supervisors each semester for a reflective conference. A matrix describing the CSTP is used as a basis for discussion and reflection. The intern and the supervisor independently determine where the intern is placed on the matrix. After reviewing the matrix, goals are set collaboratively for improvement during the next semester. During the first two years, this reflection culminates in the creation of CSTP based Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). During the third year, the intern and supervisor collaboratively identify an area of growth with which an Individual Induction Plan (IIP) is established and completed by the end of the third year.

Interns evaluate practicum supervisors on a yearly basis. Interns are polled at least twice each year to ensure that the services provided by the practicum supervisor are effective, timely, and helpful. The results of these evaluations are shared with the practicum supervisors, thereby recognizing outstanding performance. Practicum supervisors who are deemed outstanding are asked to return to support interns. They are also asked if they are interested in adding new interns to their caseloads. Interns do have the opportunity to request a new practicum supervisor. The program coordinator seeks input from the site administrators with SEI Program interns at their schools to solicit their input as to the services rendered by the practicum supervisors and the quality of communication between the two.

**Assessment of Candidates**

The SCOE SEI Program utilizes both informal and formal measures of evaluation to determine candidate competence. Clear program completion expectations are specified in the candidate handbook. The primary assessments utilized to determine candidate competence are: California Standards for the Teaching Profession Description of Practice matrix; Competency Record level 1 and 2; Learning Portfolio and Portfolio Evaluation Rubric; Site Administrator Assessment of Intern Candidate; and RICA® Passing Results. Candidates must complete all coursework with 80%, mastery and successfully apply the acquired knowledge and skills in their field placement with the same degree of mastery. Both the practicum supervisor and the site administrator evaluate candidate teaching.

Monitoring of goals, assignments, and portfolios occurs throughout the program. Instructors give on-going feedback in person and via email. In the event that an intern is struggling, the program

coordinator designs a remediation plan. The instructors and practicum supervisors are informed of the plan to provide multiple opportunities for the intern's success.

**Findings on Standards:**
After review of the institutional report and supporting documentation and after conducting interviews of candidates, graduates, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are fully met.