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Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Proposed Revisions to the Preconditions and Standards for Special Education Induction Programs

Executive Summary: This agenda item proposes revisions to the current Education Specialist Induction Preconditions and Program Standards and the field response to the proposed standards.

Policy Question: Do the draft preconditions and standards establish appropriate expectations for Education Specialist Induction programs?

Recommended Action: That the Commission adopt the proposed revisions to the preconditions and standards for Education Specialist Induction programs.

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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.

Proposed Revisions to the Preconditions and Standards for Special Education Induction Programs

Introduction

This agenda item includes proposed revisions to the current Education Specialist Induction Preconditions and 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 preconditions and program 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 Education Specialist 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's 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 new Induction Standards and Preconditions for General Education Induction Programs.

The revised General Education Induction Program Standards and Preconditions include a reoriented focus on candidate outcomes (i.e. program outputs) balanced with program inputs into the system. The Induction Program Standards focus on promoting new teacher professional growth and development as specified in the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* as the key intended outcome of an induction program. 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 are seeking alignment between the two programs so that all induction programs have an appropriate focus on outputs rather than a singular focus on program inputs.

Staff developed an electronic survey to gather specific information from the field regarding the Education Specialist 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. Information gathered from this survey was shared with the Commission at the September 2016 meeting. The survey remained open until September 15, 2016. A total of 228 responses were collected from constituents across the state including representatives from the California State University system, the University of California system, private colleges, county offices of education and school districts.

Following are the proposed amendments to the General Education Induction Preconditions and Standards to modify the language to create one set of Teacher Induction Standards that would apply to both general education and special education teachers.

Preconditions for Teacher 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 are generally compliance issues and/or requirements that can be determined as either being in place or not rather than issues of program quality.

The Commission adopted the revised preconditions listed below in December of 2015. The use of italicized font will indicate new language to address candidates seeking a Clear Education Specialist Induction credential in the preconditions and standards below.

Adopted Preconditions for ~~General~~ *Teacher* 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 *credentials held*, 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 ILP 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. All programs are required to meet the Preconditions as a condition of sponsoring a Commission-approved educator preparation program.

Analysis of Proposed Modifications to Induction Preconditions

Based upon an analysis of 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 identified by multiple responders regarding the requirement of a mentor to hold an education specialist credential. The suggested modification to Precondition 2 would 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 education specialist 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 newly adopted standards primarily focus on mentor based guidance and support which allows 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 also be appropriate for education specialist teacher induction programs. The underlined and italicized text included in the Induction Standards below represents new language that would meet the needs of education specialist induction candidates.

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. 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, 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.

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; and
- A 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; and
- 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; and
- 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 ILP 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 ILP, 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, within his or her assignment at a school and within a district.

Summary of Additional Feedback Collected Via the Survey on Special Education Induction Preconditions and Program Standards

The field continues to be supportive of the proposed changes to the Education Specialist Induction Program Preconditions and Program Standards. The idea of one set of teacher induction standards that are grounded in a candidate’s practice has resonated with induction program providers. The new standards support the induction experience as individualized and contextualized for each candidate.

Still 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.

Fiscal Impact of Modifications to Teacher Induction Standards

The fiscal impact to the Commission to implement revised Special Education Induction Preconditions and Program Standards will be minimal and absorbable. General Education teacher induction programs are transitioning to the revised induction program standards at this time. Staff would conduct this work as part of their ongoing work associated with teacher induction in California.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the Preconditions and Program Standards for Special Education Induction Programs and their candidates, thereby creating one set of teacher induction program standards for both general education and special education teachers.

Next Steps

If the Commission adopts the Teacher Education Induction Standards and Preconditions and states that will apply to both general education and special education induction programs, staff would inform teacher preparation program sponsors to begin implementing the revised Teacher Education Induction Standards in the 2016-17 school year, to have them fully implemented by 2017-18 where possible, and require full implementation of the revised standards for the 2018-19 school year.

All general education teacher induction programs are in the middle of the transition process to the Standards adopted in December 2015. For programs sponsored by local education agencies (LEAs), the two induction programs—general education and special education—have been working together and the transition should be able to be implemented fairly quickly since the same program leadership implements both programs.

In the institutions of higher education, all general education Induction and Clear Credential programs are already transitioning to the revised General Education Induction Standards. The Transition Plan was due by June 30, 2016. The Clear Education Specialist Induction programs would need to be notified of the new standards and supported to complete a Transition Plan. Staff would work directly with the IHE sponsored Induction Programs to ensure that these programs transitioned by the beginning of the 2018-19 school year.