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Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Potential Changes to the Accreditation Framework

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents potential revisions to the adopted *Accreditation Framework* for Commission discussion and possible adoption.

Recommended Action: Staff recommends that the Commission discuss the proposed changes to the *Accreditation Framework* and take action to adopt the changes, should it deem those appropriate.

Presenters: Erin Sullivan and Cheryl Hickey, Administrators, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal

II. Program Quality and Accountability
   c) Promote educator preparation and lifelong development as a shared responsibility among members of the education profession, institutions of higher education, local education agencies, and state agencies.

Potential Changes to the Accreditation Framework

Introduction
This agenda item continues the discussion that began at the January 2020 Commission meeting to consider changes to the *Accreditation Framework*. This version of the proposed changes to *Accreditation Framework* includes consideration of feedback provided by the educator preparation field, members of the Committee on Accreditation (COA), and comments made by Commissioners at the January Commission meeting. This document is presented for further discussion and, if the Commission deems appropriate, adoption. If adopted, this document will guide the Commission's accreditation system beginning in 2020.

Background
As stated in the January 2020 Commission agenda item, Education Code section 44371(a)(5) requires that the Commission's accreditation system be governed by an *Accreditation Framework* that sets forth the policies of the Commission regarding the accreditation of educator preparation programs. The initial *Accreditation Framework* was adopted in 1995 and updated with major revisions in 2007.

Between 2014 and 2016, the Commission undertook a significant initiative to strengthen and streamline accreditation on a number of fronts. These efforts have been discussed thoroughly in previous agenda items including the COA annual reports presented to the Commission at the last meeting of the calendar year. At the end of this two-year period of review and development, the Commission adopted a new *Accreditation Framework* in February 2016 to reflect the new system.

Since the adoption of the current *Accreditation Framework* in February 2016, Commission staff and the Committee on Accreditation have been implementing the new accreditation system. By reviewing the current *Accreditation Framework* at this time, the Commission can ensure the congruence of the accreditation processes and policies.

Some of the specific language contained in the 2016 *Accreditation Framework* reflects the system as it was envisioned at the time but as not yet implemented. Since that time, the Commission staff and the COA have been able to fully implement most aspects of the new accreditation system. Some of these new aspects, such as the annual Accreditation Data System (ADS), have taken a number of years to move from conceptual to operational status. Given that it has been four years since adoption of the *Accreditation Framework* and there have been many positive developments in the implementation of the accreditation system, the Commission staff provided an update to the Commission in January 2020 in order to revisit the *Framework* to ensure that the current system is accurately reflected in the *Accreditation Framework* language.

Commission Discussion in January 2020

The Commission discussed the proposed changes at its January 2020 meeting. Additionally, after the meeting, Commission staff prepared and distributed an electronic survey for any member of the public or education community to comment on the proposed changes. The survey was open in mid-February 2020 and its availability was advertised in the PSD e-News until mid-May 2020. A total of 11 responses were received through the survey. Finally, the Commmission staff discussed the proposed changes with the Committee on Accreditation at its meeting on February 21, 2020.

Staff have summarized in the chart beginning on the next page information on the major changes that were proposed at the January meeting, summarized the comments of the Commission, the COA and stakeholders, and then described the additional changes that staff have made since the January meeting to address many of these issues. A number of additional changes to add clarity, simiplify complex sentences, or correct grammar are proposed but are not called out specifically in the chart below. The full text of the proposed revised *Accreditation Framework* is included in [Appendix A](#) and indicated by underline (for additions) and strikethrough (for elimination of current language).

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission discuss these additional proposed changes and, if appropriate, adopt the language for the revised *Accreditation Framework*.

Next Steps

If adopted, staff will post the revised *Accreditation Framework* and use this as the guiding document with institutions, members of the Board of Institutional Review, and staff in implementing the accreditation system beginning in 2020.

Accreditation Framework Section	Summary of Proposed Revisions Presented in January 2020	Summary of Comments from Commissioners, Survey, and COA Members	Summary of Additional Revisions in June 2020
Introduction	Most of the language proposed to be removed refers to the strengthening and streamlining effort that took place from 2014-16. This language has been updated to reflect and focus on the current accreditation system and not the effort to redesign the system.	Commission Comments • Reconsider the graphical illustration of the system to better reflect direct and indirect measures of learning. • Consider additional language emphasizing the professional learning opportunities for all parties that result from accreditation activities and a peer review based system. These opportunities then help foster overall improvements in the wider educator preparation community as the community of peers learn from each other. Survey Responses 10 of 11 responses rated this section Clear or Very Clear. Suggestions included more emphasis on preparing candidates for service in public schools and expanding the focus of the graphic in Figure 1 from beginning practitioners to ensure inclusion of all credential areas.	• Graphic was reconceptualized to better reflect the accreditation system. • Added new language to address the benefits to all education professionals involved in accreditation and the larger benefits to the education system. • Revised language to address suggestions received through the survey to emphasize service to public schools and expanding focus of the graphic beyond beginning practitioners.

Accreditation Framework Section	Summary of Proposed Revisions Presented in January 2020	Summary of Comments from Commissioners, Survey, and COA Members	Summary of Additional Revisions in June 2020
Section 1: Authority and Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing	Most of the language in this section is grounded in statute and therefore is not proposed to be changed. A reference to Education Code Section 44372 has been added at the beginning of this section which sets for the powers and duties of the Commission regarding the accreditation system and specific Education Code sections have been added for each of the responsibilities identified in this Section.	Commission Comments • The role and importance of staff should be incorporated in the document. Expertise and training of staff are critical for a system that depends on their involvement. • Add to this section language about the role of the Commission liaison to the Committee on Accreditation. Survey Responses 8 of the 11 responses indicated this section was Clear or Very Clear and 3 did not respond to this section. One suggested that the language should reflect that the Commission should actively recruit members to the Board of Institutional Review (BIR).	• Added language to address importance of a trained and knowledgable staff to the system. • Added language about the role of the Commission liaison to the Committee on Accreditation. • Language responding to survey feedback about recruitment of BIR members was added to Section 6.

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Section 2: Functions of the Committee on Accreditation	Most of the language in this section is grounded in statute. Staff proposes to add references to the specific Education Code sections where appropriate.	Commission Comments • No comments Survey Responses 7 of 11 respondents rated this section Clear or Very Clear with the remaining not responding to this section. One commenter had suggestions related to clarifying the three options listed in comparability of standards. Feedback suggested that more detail about how an institution demonstrates alignment if they choose any other option beyond California program standards should be included. Feedback from one commenter suggested more was needed about how the accreditation system would be monitored.	Clarified language related to the options available to institutions to demonstrate alignment with program standards. It was determined that how an institution demonstrates alignment is better suited for the Handbook and was not included. It was determined that the section on Monitoring of the System is better suited for the Handbook and was not included in the Framework.

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Section 3: Accreditation Preconditions and Standards	This section includes updated and clarified language particularly for Preconditions and Common Standards and on national or professional standards.	Commission Comments • No comments Survey Responses 6 out of 11 respondents indicated that this section was either Very Clear or Clear. The remaining 5 did not respond to this section.	No additional revisions proposed
Section 4: Initial Accreditation Policies	This section is updated significantly to reflect the revisions to the Initial Institutional Approval process made by the Commission over the past three years. Additionally, it adds detail on the final step in the process whereby the Commission may grant full accreditation to an institution. The *Framework* is currently silent on this part of the process.	Commission Comments • Given that there are multiple stages, additional clarity on the types of questions that are most appropriate for each stage may be beneficial. Survey Response 7 of the 11 respondents rated this section either Very Clear or Clear. The remaining 4 did not respond to this section. One respondent suggested that it should be made more clear that institutions applying for Initial Institutional Approval must have the goal of preparing educators for California public schools.	• Staff will include this guidance with Initial Institutional Approval agenda items.

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Section 5: Continuing Accreditation Policies	This section has been updated and refined to reflect changes that have occurred as the Commission has moved from conception to implementation of the new streamlined and strengthened accreditation system.	Commission Comments • Needs more emphasis on the use of data for program changes, reflection and meaningful and deep continuous improvement. • Language that was proposed to be stricken might be maintained in order to address programmatic improvement. Survey Responses 6 out of the 11 responded that this section is either Clear or Very Clear. The other 5 did not respond to this section.	• Additional language was added to address use of data for continuous improvement.

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Section 6: Board of Institutional Reviewers	This section has been refined to better reflect the roles of Board of Institutional Review members in the current accreditation system. Most of the changes are intended to enhance clarity. A few changes in this section are proposed to be eliminated due to the fact that they are procedural in nature and are better placed within the Accreditation Handbook.	Commission Comments • Commissioners commented that it is important to know whether the system as designed is, in fact, resulting in the overall objective of ensuring that TK-12 schools are staffed with well prepared educators. • Commissioners discussed the need for ensuring attention to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in all of its programs and responsibilities. Survey Responses 7 of the 11 respondents noted that this section was either Clear or Very Clear. Four did not respond to this section.	• Additional language to was added to ensure a focus not only process issues but also on the more fundamental question of whether candidates are being well prepared. • It was determined that the issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion are important issues for the Commission as a whole and therefore would be included in the Commision's discussions on its strategic plan and as part of a recognition of the Commission's 50th anniversary. • Language responding to survey about the Commission actively recruiting BIR members was added here.

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Section 7: Articulation Between National and State Accreditation	This section has been updated significantly. At the time that this *Framework* was adopted there was only one national accrediting body for educator preparation whereas at this time there are now two. The language in this section now reflects the possibility of different types of partnerships with accrediting bodies and clarifies different purposes and processes with national accreditation and professional accreditation.	Commission Comments • This section needs clarity, perhaps a rewrite. • Remove the "what ifs" and leave these kinds of scenarios to the *Accreditation Handbook* if they are necessary at all. • Perhaps focus more on the principles that guide collaboration with other accredting bodies with the focus on process going into the *Accreditation Handbook.* Survey Responses 7 out of the 11 responses noted that this section was either Clear or Very Clear.	• This section was significantly rewritten for clarity, for a focus on the principles related to the national and professional accrediting bodies and less on process.

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Section 8: Evaluation and Modification of the Framework	This section was changed to reflect the Commission's responsibility to consult with the key stakeholders including higher education before making changes to the *Framework.* Given that these bodies have representatives on the Commission and given that adoption of a *Framework* is the purview of the Commission, the term consultation is appropriate.	Commission Comments • Importance of the Commission evaluating the accreditation system for its own continuous improvement was noted. Some suggestions for how these efforts could be better communicated to and discussed by the Commission in the future. • With respect to #3 Significant Modifications of the Framework, the Commission should reconsider this language since the current language reflects a historical perspective, a different relationship between the accreditor (the Commission) and those it accredits (the institutions and programs) and important stakeholders. Additionally, it does not reflect new entities that are now part of the educator preparation community, in particular, local education agencies (LEAs). • Revised language might focus more on the concept of collaboration and stability in the accreditation system. Survey Responses 7 out of the 11 respondents said that this section was either Clear or Very Clear. Respondents suggested including LEA's in the modification section.	• The language in the section on Evaluation of the Accreditation System was revised for greater emphasis on continuous improvement of the system. • This section was rewritten in accordance to Commission's direction.