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# 3C

## Action

### *Educator Preparation Committee*

#### **Initial Institutional Approval – Stage V: Consideration of Full Institutional Approval for Atwater Elementary School District**

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item presents, as part of the Initial Institutional Approval process, the report from the Provisional Site Visit and the Committee on Accreditation’s recommendation for an accreditation decision for Atwater Elementary School District. The Commission will consider granting Atwater Elementary School District full institutional approval.

**Recommended Action:** Staff recommends that the Commission review the Atwater Elementary School District Provisional Site Visit report and the Committee on Accreditation’s recommended accreditation decision and consider granting Atwater Elementary School District full institutional approval.

**Presenter:** Bob Loux, Consultant, Professional Services Division

#### **Strategic Plan Goal**

##### ***II. Program Quality and Accountability***

- b) Effectively and efficiently monitor program implementation and outcomes and hold all approved educator preparation programs to high standards and continuous improvement through the accreditation process.

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# Initial Institutional Approval – Stage V: Consideration of Full Institutional Approval for Atwater Elementary School District

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## **Introduction**

This agenda item presents, as part of Stage V of the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process, the report from the Provisional Site Visit for Atwater Elementary School District (AESD) as well as the Committee on Accreditation's recommended accreditation decision. Atwater Elementary School District was granted provisional institutional approval by the Commission in August 2018 and the Committee on Accreditation (COA) approved its Teacher Induction program in November 2018. The Commission will consider granting Atwater Elementary School District full institutional approval.

## **Background**

California Education Code §44372(c) sets forth the Commission's responsibility to rule on the eligibility of an applicant for initial accreditation for the purpose of offering a program of educator preparation. The Commission has established the IIA process whereby an institution seeking to offer one or more educator preparation programs in California must first satisfactorily complete five stages to be approved as a program sponsor.

At its December 2015 meeting, the Commission approved a new IIA process as part of the Strengthening and Streamlining Accreditation project. Updates to the IIA process were subsequently approved during the February 2017 Commission meeting. An institution that is granted Provisional Approval in Stage IV of IIA, and subsequently approved by the COA to offer its proposed credential program(s), is required to host a Provisional Site Visit the year after its first cohort of candidates completes the program, as indicated in the highlighted column of the chart on the following page. The conclusion of the IIA process is determination by the Commission of whether to grant or deny the institution Full Approval (Stage V).

Pursuant to the *Accreditation Framework*, "The Commission may grant or deny full institutional approval or may grant institutional approval with a requirement that the COA's draft stipulations must be addressed and presented to the COA for action within a designated timeframe." If the Commission grants full approval, the Administrator of Accreditation will assign the institution to one of the seven established accreditation cohorts and the institution will participate in all activities of the seven-year accreditation cycle established by the Commission. Granting full approval with a requirement that the COA's draft stipulations be addressed will remand the issues back to the COA for follow up to ensure that the program sufficiently addresses all concerns raised by the team. Alternatively, the Commission may keep an institution in the provisional stage of the approval process for another year while the institution works with staff to address all stipulations. In this case, the COA will consider any

quarterly or year-out reports on the institution's progress in meeting stipulations, as it does with fully approved institutions, and within one year make a new accreditation determination. At that time, the new decision of the COA would come back to the Commission for its decision. If the Commission denies full approval, the Administrator of Accreditation will inform the institution that it is no longer permitted to admit additional candidates to its programs and will work with the institution to develop a teach-out plan for any current candidates.

## Five Stages of the Initial Institutional Approval Process

IIA Process	Stage I	State II	Stage III	Stage IV	Stage V
<b>Action</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Preconditions &amp; Common Standards</b>	<b>Program Standards</b>	<b>Provisional Site Visit</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Ensures legal eligibility of institution in California  Ensures institution understands requirements of Commission's accreditation system	Ensures that institution has capacity to sponsor effective programs	Ensures institution meets all relevant preconditions  Ensures institution meets all Common Standards	Ensures all proposed programs meet all relevant program standards	Program operates for 2-4 years and hosts a provisional accreditation site visit
<b>Requirements</b>	Institution must: 1. Have legal eligibility 2. Attend Accreditation 101 with institutional team	Submit responses to: • 12 Eligibility Criteria	Submit responses to: • Preconditions • Common Standards	Submit responses to: • Program Standards	Institution must: • Collect data • Host provisional site visit
<b>Reviewed By</b>	Staff	Staff	<b>Preconditions:</b> Staff <b>Common Standards:</b> BIR	BIR	Site Visit Team and COA
<b>Authority</b>	Staff	Commission	Commission	COA	Commission
<b>Decision</b>	Determine Eligibility for Stage II	Eligibility: 1. Grant 2. Deny	Provisional Approval: 1. Grant 2. Deny	Program(s): 1. Approve 2. Deny	1. Grant Full Approval 2. Grant Full Approval & Remand to COA to Address Stipulations 3. Continue Provisional Status for 1 Year to Address Stipulations 4. Deny
<b>IIA Status</b>	Not Approved	Not Approved	Provisional Approval**	Provisional Approval***	Full Approval

\*At conclusion of stage

\*\*Institutionally approved but cannot offer programs

\*\*\*May begin offering approved program(s)

Atwater Elementary School District completed the first four stages of the Initial Institutional Approval process including hosting a provisional site visit. The timeline for these activities is illustrated in the following table.

Activity	Date
Stage I: Prerequisites	December 2016 – Completed Accreditation 101
Stage II: Eligibility Requirements	<a href="#">October 2017</a> – Commission Granted Eligibility
Stage III: Preconditions and Common Standards	<a href="#">August 2018</a> – Commission Granted Provisional Approval
Stage IV: Initial Program Review	<a href="#">November 2018</a> – Committee on Accreditation Granted Initial Program Approval for Teacher Induction <a href="#">Attachment</a>
Began Operating Teacher Induction program	November 2018
Provisional Site Visit Conducted	November 2021
Report of Provisional Site Visit to Committee on Accreditation	<a href="#">February 2022</a>
Stage V: Commission considers Full Approval	April 2022

The Provisional Site Visit was conducted in accordance with the procedures approved by the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation (COA) and outlined in the *Accreditation Handbook*. Atwater Elementary School District submitted a complete Program Review submission, Common Standards Review submission, and responses to preconditions within six months preceding its Provisional Site Visit. The Board of Institutional Review members assigned to the visit worked together to review all evidence submitted as part of Program Review and Common Standards Review and provided feedback to Atwater Elementary School District regarding its preliminary alignment to the Commission’s adopted standards. Staff assigned to the Provisional Site Visit reviewed the institution’s responses to preconditions to ensure full alignment. In November 2021 the institution hosted a Provisional Site Visit and the results of the visit, including the team’s findings and accreditation recommendation, are included in the report in [Appendix A](#) that was presented to the COA at its February 2022 meeting.

The COA reviewed the report and discussed the site visit findings with the team lead and the representatives from Atwater Elementary School District. Following the discussion, the COA agreed with the team recommendation and confirmed that if Atwater Elementary School District were a fully accredited institution, and the site visit report resulted from a regularly scheduled Year 6 site visit, that the COA’s accreditation decision would be to accept the recommendation from the team for Accreditation.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Commission grant full approval to Atwater Elementary School District.

### **Next Steps**

Depending upon the Commission's decision staff will take the appropriate next steps, which are:

- Full Approval: The Administrator of Accreditation will assign the institution to one of the seven established accreditation cohorts and the institution will participate in all activities of the seven-year accreditation cycle established by the Commission.
- Full approval with a requirement that the Committee on Accreditation's (COA) draft stipulations must be addressed and presented to the COA for action within the timeframe designated in the team report. Commission staff assigned to the institution's Provisional Site Visit will work with the institution to obtain timely and appropriate evidence addressing all stipulations within the time frame designated in the report and report back to the COA for their further consideration and action.
- Keep the institution in the provisional stage of the approval process for another year while the institution works with staff to address all stipulations. Commission staff assigned to the institution's Provisional Site Visit will work with the institution to obtain timely and appropriate evidence addressing all stipulations within the time frame designated in the report and report back to the COA for their further consideration and action. Within one year, the COA will make a new decision about the institution's accreditation status and the report will come back to the Commission for its decision about the approval status of the institution.
- Denial: The Administrator of Accreditation will inform the institution that it is no longer permitted to admit additional candidates to its programs and will work with the institution to develop a teach-out plan for any current candidate

**Appendix A**  
**Report of the Provisional Site Visit Accreditation Team to**  
**Atwater Elementary School District**  
**Professional Services Division**  
**February 2022**

**Overview of this Report**

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at **Atwater Elementary School District**. The report of the team presents the findings based upon a thorough review of all available and relevant institutional and program documentation as well as all supporting evidence including interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, a recommendation of **Accreditation** is made for the institution.

**Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions**  
**For All Commission Approved Programs Offered by the Institution**

Common Standards	Status
1) Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	<b>Met</b>
2) Candidate Recruitment and Support	<b>Met</b>
3) Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	<b>Met</b>
4) Continuous Improvement	<b>Met</b>
5) Program Impact	<b>Met</b>

**Program Standards**

Programs	Total Program Standards	Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Teacher Induction	6	6	0	0

The site visit was completed in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee on Accreditation regarding the activities of the site visit:

- Preparation for the Accreditation Visit
- Preparation of the Institutional Documentation and Evidence
- Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team
- Intensive Evaluation of Program Data
- Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

**California Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
Committee on Accreditation  
Initial Institutional Approval Provisional Site Visit Team Report**

**Institution:** Atwater Elementary School District

**Dates of Visit:** November 15-17, 2021

**Accreditation Team Recommendation: Accreditation**

**Rationale:**

The unanimous recommendation of **Accreditation** was based on a thorough review of all institutional and programmatic information and materials available prior to and during the accreditation site visit including interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, graduates, and local school personnel. The team 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 recommendation of Accreditation for the institution was based upon the following:

Preconditions

All preconditions have been determined to be aligned.

Program Standards

All six Teacher Induction program standards were Met.

Common Standards

All five Common Standards were Met.

Overall Recommendation

Based on the fact that the team found that all standards for the Teacher Induction program were met and that all Common Standards were met, the team recommends Accreditation.

In addition, staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.
- Atwater Elementary School District is permitted to propose new educator preparation programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- Atwater Elementary School District be assigned to a cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to offer the following credential programs and to recommend candidates for the appropriate and related credentials upon satisfactorily completing all requirements:

Teacher Induction



## Accreditation Team

### Team Lead:

Jodie Schwartzfarb  
New Haven Unified School District

### Programs Reviewers:

Alison Beech  
Stanislaus County Office of Education

### Common Standards:

Barbara Howard (Retired)  
Riverside County Office of Education

### Staff to the Visit:

Bob Loux  
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

## Documents Reviewed

Common Standards Submission  
Program Review Submission  
Common Standards Addendum  
Program Review Addendum  
Organizational Chart  
Resumes/Vitae  
Accreditation Website  
Job Description- Advertisement  
Candidate Files  
Sample Induction Timeline

Candidate Handbooks  
Personnel Action Form  
Mentor Forum Agenda  
Mentor ILP Training Video  
Candidate Placement Document  
ILP template  
ILP Mid-Year Review  
Sample Candidate ILPs  
Database Sample 20-21  
Precondition Responses

**Interviews Conducted**

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Candidates	38
Completers	16
Principals	8
Institutional Administration	2
Program Coordinators	1
Mentors	3
Credential Analysts and Staff	2
Steering Committee Members	9
Superintendent	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80</b>

*Note: In some cases, individuals were interviewed more than once due to multiple roles. Thus, the number of interviews conducted exceeds the actual number of individuals interviewed.*

**Background Information**

Atwater Elementary School District is located in the community of Atwater, just off Highway 99 in Merced County in the agriculturally rich San Joaquin Valley of Central California. The district serves approximately 5,000 students in grades TK-8. The district is ethnically diverse with the majority of students being of Hispanic descent. In the 2019-2020 school year, 81% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch. A large portion of its students are also English learners (26% EL and 19% FEP) and 13% qualify for special education support. The district comprises six TK-6 schools, one 7-8th grade school and two TK-8 schools. There are currently 243 teachers in the district of which 56 (23%) are first- or second-year teachers.

**Education Unit**

The Department of Educational Services supervises the induction program led by the Assistant Superintendent. There are currently 43 candidates enrolled in the program. In 2021, the program awarded 13 clear credentials. There are 2 full-time general education mentors, one part-time education specialist mentor and a part-time program coordinator as part of the faculty.

**Table 1: Program Review Status**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Number of Program Completers (2019-20)</b>	<b>Number of Candidates Enrolled (2020-21)</b>
Teacher Induction	12	43

## **The Visit**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this site visit was conducted virtually. The team and institutional stakeholders were interviewed via technology.

### **Provisional Site Visit in Stage V of Initial Institutional Approval**

During Stage V of the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process, a new institution hosts a Provisional Site Visit (PSV). The site visit team is composed of program leaders for that type of program as well as experienced Board of Institutional Review members. Because this PSV is based on a routine sixth year accreditation site visit, the team makes decisions on all Common and applicable Program Standards as well as an Accreditation recommendation and any stipulations, if appropriate. The institution and its Commission-approved programs, in this case Teacher Induction, have only operated for two years.

### **PRECONDITION FINDINGS**

After review of all relevant preconditions for this institution, all have been determined to be met.

### **PROGRAM REPORTS**

#### **Teacher Induction**

##### Program Design

Atwater Elementary School District (AESD) provides teacher induction services to their employees who hold Preliminary Single Subject, Multiple Subject, and Education Specialist credentials.

The AESD New Teacher Induction program provides general education and education specialist candidates with an individualized induction experience that includes intensive, ongoing support from a qualified mentor and aims to lead to candidate growth in the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. AESD identifies and assigns a full-time mentor to each candidate within the first 30 days of her/his enrollment in the program. Efforts are made to match the mentor and candidate according to grade level and/or subject level, as appropriate to the candidate's employment. A majority of candidates reported that they feel well-matched with their mentor, with one second year candidate stating, "I feel the district took time and effort to match us up with our mentors." Mentors are full-release, giving candidates greater access to just-in-time support, as well as more opportunities for observation and feedback. The program coordinator reported that the expectation is that mentors observe and meet with their assigned candidates on a weekly basis. In stakeholder interviews, year one, year two, and early completion option candidates confirmed this practice.

Each candidate in the AESD induction program receives an average of not less than one hour per week of individualized support and/or mentoring, either from the mentor or coordinated by the mentor. During an interview with the program coordinator, it was stated that mentors facilitate support between content specialists (district coaches or teachers on special assignment) and candidates in the induction program. Program mentors confirmed that when

a candidate has a need in which the mentor lacks experience, the mentor assists the candidate in connecting with an individual who can offer guidance.

Within 60 days of enrollment in the program, each candidate develops an individual learning plan (ILP) which includes professional goals crafted by the candidate. The candidate and her/his mentor collaboratively develop this plan with input from the site administrator. Candidates stated that their mentor met with them at the beginning of the school year, sometimes before, to begin this process. The program director and program coordinator confirmed the ILP is created solely for the professional growth and development of the candidate and is not used for evaluation or employment purposes.

AESD's New Teacher Induction Program offers an early completion option (ECO) to candidates who are experienced and demonstrate exceptional teaching practices based on the program's established criteria. The program director and program coordinator are responsible for determining if the candidate has met all the requirements for the early completion option. ECO candidates must demonstrate within their induction experience that they are able to apply the knowledge, skills, and competencies required of those teachers who complete the two-year induction program. ECO candidates indicated that they progress towards mastery of the remaining CSTPs that were listed on their ILP in one year, while a typical candidate would show their mastery progress over all the CSTPs in two years.

At the end of their induction experience, candidates participate in an exit activity which allows the candidate to present documented evidence and discuss growth in the CSTPs over the course of the program to a panel consisting of mentors other than their own and program leadership. Program staff stated that mentors attend this exit activity with their candidates, so that they may assist candidates when discussing their induction experience. The process includes a rubric for reviewing the exit activities; each candidate receives multiple rubrics with feedback from the interview panel.

Prior to recommending candidates for clear credentials, the program coordinator and mentor verify that the candidate has completed all program activities and requirements, and that those activities have been accurately documented in the candidate's Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Candidates and their mentors use Google Docs to record their work on the candidate's ILP. Evidence collected to document that candidates are making progress toward mastery of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession consists of the following:

- The candidate's ILP, which includes professional development goals (including any revisions or updates made during the course of the program)
- Evidence of progress toward meeting ILP goals collected on the goals, evidence, and reflections sheet
- Evidence of participating in an average of one-hour per week of mentor support as recorded on a collaborative conversation record
- Evidence that the candidate has exhibited growth in the CSTPs throughout the program, based on collaborative assessment by the candidate and mentor

During an interview with the induction program mentors, the recommendation process for candidates who have completed the program was described. From the time of employment, a human resources executive assistant works with induction program leadership to identify and track candidates who need/qualify for induction. The program director and the program coordinator use a district-created database to track all completion requirements for candidates in the program. The program director, program coordinator, and assistant superintendent of human resources work together to cross-check that all requirements have been met by candidates at the end of their induction experience. Upon verifying the completion of all program requirements, the program coordinator communicates with the executive assistant of the district superintendent. This executive assistant is an authorized submitter to the Commission; she uses the names given to her by the program coordinator to recommend program completers for their clear credential online.

#### Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

The individual learning plan (ILP) is developed by the candidate and the mentor and housed as a Google Doc, as evidenced by review of program documents. The ILP planning guide supports the candidate and mentor in determining candidates' needs, consulting with the site administrator, and in building on the knowledge and skills gained in the preliminary preparation program. During interviews, several candidates stated that their mentor routinely considers their strengths, as well as areas of growth, when working together. Mentors review the individual development plan (IDP) from preservice with candidates as the first step of the ILP planning guide. Candidates and their mentors also meet with the site administrator to solicit her/his input in each year of the program. Self-assessment takes place on the Continuum of Teaching Practice, as well as through classroom observation data. Candidates and mentors record ILP goals in the program-provided Google Docs, gather evidence of the candidate's growth, and discuss and record reflections over the course of the academic year. Midyear, and at the beginning of year 2, candidates work with mentors to evaluate and revise their ILPs as needed.

Candidates receive a minimum of one hour per week of face-to-face mentoring for the two years that they are enrolled in the program. Mentors complete a weekly collaborative conversation record which is attached to the candidates' ILPs. Mentors record the focus of the weekly meeting, successes, and challenges or next steps. Candidates report that this weekly support comes at flexible times, so that mentors see a variety of happenings in the classroom; a year one candidate stated that the support given by her mentor "makes (her) feel more secure in what (she) is doing." Beyond this routine weekly support, mentors are available for just in time support. Mentors report that being released to mentor full time allows them to be available to quickly respond to a candidate's needs; candidates confirmed this practice during stakeholder interviews.

In addition to weekly support, the AESD New Teacher Induction program also provides induction-specific professional development sessions based upon candidates' ILP needs. This professional development is referred to by the program as "Just in Time Professional Development." Program leadership expressed that the topics selected for these frequent,

elective professional developments are based on the results of surveys that solicit information from candidates regarding their needs. A year two candidate confirmed by stating, “My needs have been met because I’ve been asked about them, and I’ve responded to feedback requests.” The district also provides professional development for all teachers regarding district instructional initiatives. During her interview, the program coordinator stated that these professional development opportunities are optional for candidates. These interactions with both experienced and other new colleagues, site administrators, district leaders, and the AESD New Teacher Induction Program mentors provide multiple opportunities for candidates to connect with the school community. AESD also encourages candidates in their program to further their learning beyond in-district professional development. These opportunities may include advising candidates about upcoming professional development opportunities or assisting candidates in acquiring the means to attend conferences or other larger-scale learning opportunities, as well as technology-based opportunities such as webinars and/or social media resources.

The table below gives a month-by-month overview of a typical induction experience in the AESD New Teacher Induction Program.

August	September	October	November	December
Program Enrollment	ILP planning/ data gathering	Professional Development	Begin Goal #1	Continue Goal #1
Mentor assignment within 60 days of enrollment	Administrator input meeting	Complete Continuum of Teaching Practice	Gather evidence	Gather evidence
		Complete ILP		

January	February	March	April	May
Reflect on #1 goal	Begin goal #2	Continue goal #2	Reflect on goals	Revisit Continuum of Practice
Reflect on midyear progress	Professional Development	Collect evidence	Finalize ILP	Exit activities (Year 2 only)

Assessment of Candidates

The AESD New Teacher Induction Program assesses candidates’ progress towards mastery of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession in the following manner:

Candidates self-assess on the Continuum of Teaching Practice at the beginning of year 1 of the program, at the beginning of year 2 of the program, and at the end of year 2 of the program. This allows candidates to gauge their growth and allow program staff to note where growth has occurred.

Each candidate creates an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) in collaboration with her/his mentor. This ILP contains several professional growth goals. Candidates document evidence of making progress toward meeting these goals on the Goals, Evidence and Reflections document within the program-provided Google Docs. These activities show growth and improvement towards mastery of the CSTP. Interviews with mentors revealed that they, along with the program coordinator, collaboratively review the ILP at midyear and at the end of each year of the program to determine whether the candidate is making progress, and to provide extra support to candidates who may need it. Furthermore, program leadership explained that for candidates needing extra support, an action plan would be created to guide them. Program leadership also confirmed that any candidate needing support beyond their two years of induction would have a similar action plan created to allow for continued support.

At the end of year two of the program, the candidate, along with their mentor, is asked to “defend” the ILP before the program coordinator. Candidates are asked to use classroom data to demonstrate their progress toward mastery of the CSTPs. Candidates are also asked to detail the professional development activities they have completed to show growth in CSTP 6. Since each teacher is unique, the products in this activity are as well. Teachers may choose to use technology, videos, student work, photographs or any other method that demonstrates their growth. Program leadership reflected that prior exit activities by candidates were varied in delivery. Candidates are assessed during this process using an exit activity rubric.

#### Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report and supporting documentation, and the completion of interviews with candidates, completers, mentors, and employers the team determined that all program standards are met for the Teacher Induction credential program.

### **INSTITUTION SUMMARY**

Throughout the review of the AESD New Teacher Induction Program, evidence supported the existence of a program which works to thoughtfully meet candidate needs while keeping all stakeholders informed and a part of the program. This new program keeps the needs of the candidates first and foremost in mind, working to individualize support in a variety of ways, from interacting with mentors, to offering professional development (PD), and connecting with site and district initiatives. Documents reviewed provided evidence of mentor support through a full-release model and interviews confirmed strong, positive perspectives of mentors having flexibility as to when they can meet with candidates

While receiving support from throughout the district, the current superintendent was instrumental in creating an in-house induction program in AESD. With regular, ongoing communication among stakeholder groups, induction leadership and mentors can meet

candidate needs and desires in a timely fashion. The support provided by the mentors was highly praised by current candidates and program completers.

The AESD New Teacher Induction Program supports the ILP process beginning with connecting candidates and mentors as soon as possible upon hiring, sometimes even during the summer before the school year begins. Connecting with site administration for a triad meeting, setting goals, introducing, and exploring the CSTPs, offering PD and having full-release mentors offering weekly support, candidates shared that they are well-supported in their development as teachers. Having an in-district induction program has proved beneficial to all involved, strengthening connections among those who support candidates and working to infuse both site and district initiatives into the candidates' experiences. From the mentors to candidates and completers, the full-time release model was hailed as a strong positive aspect, allowing support to be given in a variety of ways at a variety of times. Completers credited mentors and their support as leading to positive administrative evaluations, while another mentioned veteran teachers looking to the induction candidates to share new strategies and information gleaned from the induction program. Data from the Commission's Data Dashboard was another indicator that the program was very effective in helping the teachers develop their skills and tools to develop their practice, with over 90% stating that the program was effective or highly effective in helping them become more effective teachers.

Stakeholder input is sought throughout AESD via the following activities: 1) district level cabinet meetings have a standing induction item on their agendas; 2) site administrators have regular contact with mentors when they are on campus; and 3) the steering committee has members from all stakeholder groups who discuss aspects of induction. These groups are also presented with program data to review and offer suggestions and insights around next steps. Candidates can provide feedback to the program through surveys administered during the year and at the end of PD sessions.

Throughout the visit, the team found that all common and program standards were met. The Commission's Completer Survey also showed that the teachers were very satisfied with how the program responded to their needs, with 93% stating that the program was either effective or very effective to answering their concerns. Though current candidates are beginning their careers during this challenging period of COVID, they stated that, "Regardless of the year we had last year, my support never wavered." Commitment to support of new teachers is evident throughout the program and supports candidate retention in AESD.



**COMMON STANDARDS FINDINGS**

<b>Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation</b>	<b>Team Finding</b>
Each Commission-approved institution has the infrastructure in place to operate effective educator preparation programs. Within this overall infrastructure:	<i>No response needed</i>
The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision of teaching and learning that fosters coherence among and is clearly represented in all educator preparation programs. This vision is consistent with preparing educators for California public schools and the effective implementation of California’s adopted standards and curricular frameworks.	<b>Consistently</b>
The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders in the organization, coordination, and decision making for all educator preparation programs.	<b>Consistently</b>
The education unit ensures that faculty and instructional personnel regularly and systematically collaborate with colleagues in P-12 settings, college and university units and members of the broader educational community to improve educator preparation.	<b>Consistently</b>
The institution provides the unit with sufficient resources for the effective operation of each educator preparation program, including, but not limited to, coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum, professional development/instruction, field-based supervision and clinical experiences.	<b>Consistently</b>
The Unit Leadership has the authority and institutional support required to address the needs of all educator preparation programs and considers the interests of each program within the institution.	<b>Consistently</b>
Recruitment and faculty development efforts support hiring and retention of faculty who represent and support diversity and excellence.	<b>Consistently</b>
The institution employs, assigns and retains only qualified persons to teach courses, provide professional development, and supervise field-based and clinical experiences. Qualifications of faculty and other instructional personnel must include, but are not limited to: a) current knowledge of the content; b) knowledge of the current context of public schooling including the California adopted P-12 content standards, frameworks, and accountability systems; c) knowledge of diversity in society, including diverse abilities, culture, language, ethnicity, and gender orientation; and d) demonstration of effective professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.	<b>Consistently</b>
The education unit monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements.	<b>Consistently</b>

## **Finding on Common Standard 1: Met**

### **Summary of information applicable to the standard**

Using the work of the New Teacher Center as its base, the AESD New Teacher Induction Program is based in the State Standards for Educator Preparation and the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.

The AESD New Teacher Induction Program is led by a two-person leadership team comprised of the program director and the assistant superintendent of HR who communicate about induction work regularly. The induction director and mentors meet weekly to review what is happening in the program and prepare information to be shared the next week with site administrators as reported by all parties involved.

Mentors receive training monthly from the program director and coordinator, covering ways to improve services for candidates, practice coaching conversations, and plan next steps as needed. As reported by the mentors, “We actually have a Google classroom set up for all of our forums...some of the things we have discussed are coaching conversations, coaching stems, we practice coaching with each other. We have information about the tools available to use. There are also articles” to support the mentors in their work. Based on a review of a mentor forum agenda, the team explores the foundations of the Induction program and works to explore best practices.

Beyond the leadership team, the program receives guidance from the steering committee. The committee meets twice a year and is composed of representatives from all stakeholder groups. At their meetings, the committee works together to assess the quality of the induction program and review recent data from surveys and optional just-in-time professional development sessions. Using this data, the group discusses next steps for the AESD New Teacher Induction Program as reported by the committee. For example, the committee shared that data showed candidates wanted more time to collaborate as well as opportunities to observe other teachers, so induction has moved forward to provide such opportunities. PD offered now includes time for teachers to collaborate with each other.

Site administrators are also able to provide feedback and offer input to the induction program even if they are not part of the steering committee. Mentors meet with site administrators at the beginning of every year to update them on the program and to receive their input around site-based initiatives, as evidenced by interviews with site administrators, mentors, and candidates. Annually, site administrators also complete an online survey to “solicit their input around program effectiveness,” as is stated on the program’s website.

The AESD New Teacher Induction Program, while new, receives support from the district office in a variety of ways. Resources are allocated for personnel to both run the program and support induction candidates. Induction positions include both a program director and program coordinator, with three teachers being released full time as mentors. Program leadership reports that due to COVID, a need was created for an additional mentor and the

district provided funds to hire someone to fill this need. Planning for usage of a recently passed block grant, the superintendent shared that the board has earmarked funds specifically for induction and teacher support. Additional district office staff work to support the program through the onboarding of candidates and filing for their clear credentials. The administrative assistant to human resources works closely with teachers when hired to verify their credentials and help determine if they are eligible for induction support, as evidenced through interviews with district office staff. Per the program's website and supported through interviews, the executive assistant to the superintendent also supports induction by making the recommendations for clear credentials once candidates have completed the program.

In addition to financial resources, the program is supported with physical space for teachers to meet. A room provided was like a "comforting coffee shop" according to the superintendent, where pre-COVID, teachers could come when needing support after a bad day, as well as when attending professional development. Now that more in-person events are happening, teachers are returning to use the room while having a Zoom option for attending sessions is still available, according to program leadership.

Using data garnered through surveys and professional development session feedback, as stated on the program website, the induction leadership team has the authority to make decisions and changes for the program's betterment. Such decisions may be around topics for "just-in-time" professional development, where topics are selected based on candidate surveys as reported by program leadership and mentors, or to meet program staff needs. For example, when the time of the weekly mentor meetings needed to be adjusted to meet everyone's needs, the program was able to shift the time from Monday mornings to Friday afternoons easily, as reported by program leadership.

For induction-based positions, AESD follows the district's non-discrimination policy in employment matters to ensure a diverse and excellent staff. Per the mentor application, those involved with directly supporting induction candidates must meet requirements around knowledge of training and supporting others, be able to implement effective lesson planning strategies while creating effective learning environments and meet physical requirements allowing them to complete their assigned duties.

Professional development is offered through the induction program and administered by mentors, though at times district specialists may be invited to present, as reported by program leadership. Just-in-time professional development topics are based off candidate desires as stated by both mentors and candidates. Other professional development sessions are provided to support candidates in their exploration of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) and review of evidence candidates collect to show progress on their goals, as reported by program mentors.

To ensure staff are qualified for their positions, those supporting Induction candidates are evaluated on the CSTPs per the Summary Performance Appraisal for Permanent Teachers in AESD. Candidates are also surveyed twice a year about both the program and their mentors

per the AESD Induction teacher mid-year survey, the AESD Induction Participating Teacher End of Year Survey, and confirmed through interviews with mentors and program leadership. These surveys address various aspects of the induction program, with a large emphasis on the mentor’s role and candidate’s experience working with mentors.

Feedback about professional development sessions and those who lead them is received through end of session evaluations. This feedback is reviewed by various stakeholder groups and used to plan program next steps, as reported by mentors, candidates, and the steering committee.

Per the response to common standards provided by the program, a completion database is maintained throughout the year to record candidate progress on meeting program requirements. At the end of Year 2, or the end of Year 1 for Early Completion Option candidates, “the coordinator reviews records and prepares recommendations [for clear credentials]. The official recommendation to the Commission for a candidate’s clear credential is made by the program director in partnership with the Human Resources Department and the Superintendent’s Office. Candidates are recommended to the Commission and notified by email that their recommendation is in process,” as is stated in the response to common standards. The program coordinator and director review the database before sharing it with the assistant superintendent of human resources, who then gives the candidate names to the executive assistant to the superintendent to recommend teachers for their clear credentials.

<b>Common Standard 2: Candidate Recruitment and Support</b>	<b>Team Finding</b>
Candidates are recruited and supported in all educator preparation programs to ensure their success.	<i>No response needed</i>
The education unit accepts applicants for its educator preparation programs based on clear criteria that include multiple measures of candidate qualifications.	<b>Consistently</b>
The education unit purposefully recruits and admits candidates to diversify the educator pool in California and provides the support, advice, and assistance to promote their successful entry and retention in the profession.	<b>Consistently</b>
Appropriate information and personnel are clearly identified and accessible to guide each candidate’s attainment of program requirements.	<b>Consistently</b>
Evidence regarding progress in meeting competency and performance expectations is consistently used to guide advisement and candidate support efforts. A clearly defined process is in place to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies.	<b>Consistently</b>

## **Finding on Common Standard 2: Met**

### **Summary of information applicable to the standard**

The Induction program is used as a recruiting tool and draw for new teachers to work in AESD, as shared by both the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services. Induction mentors attend job recruitment fairs to share that there is, “lots of support [in Atwater] and how we support. [Mentors] tell their story” to assist with attracting those new to the profession to work in Atwater. Program leadership is aware of “how important it is to support these folks [as] they have options to go elsewhere.” Upon hiring, the administrative assistant to HR reviews teacher credentials to determine induction eligibility, as shared in interviews. Then, per the AESD New Teacher Induction Program handbook, the “Atwater Elementary School District provides teacher induction services to our employees who hold Preliminary Single Subject, Multiple Subject and Education Specialist credentials.”

Using the mentor application as a guide, only those who meet the qualifications are approved to work as mentor support for induction candidates. To qualify, mentors must have at least five years of successful TK-8 teaching experience as stated in the program’s Common Standards narrative. “AESD’s New Teacher Induction Program mentors have extensive classroom experience and grade level and content-area expertise and demonstrate the ability, desire, and flexibility needed to support candidates.” As mentors are full-time release teachers on special assignment (TOSAs), they have flexibility in their days to work with candidates as needed. Mentors find this flexibility “allows [them] to be in [the candidate’s] space and get to know them better and know how their classrooms run. [Mentors] get to know their kids.” This full-time release model “is a benefit.” “The word is ‘available,’” as reported by mentors. Candidates reported appreciating that “mentors come in with flexible times so that they see different parts of the day and different types of lessons.”

Assessment of candidates occurs in multiple ways. Throughout the program, candidates self-assess on the Continuum of Teaching Practice. Twice a year the mentor and program coordinator review candidates’ ILP goals and progress towards reaching goals to see who may need extra support, as stated on the program website and confirmed through interviews with program leadership. The coordinator maintains a database charting candidate progress towards completion of the induction program. Data from this hub of information is shared with mentors to help guide their support of candidates as shared during mentor interviews. The database is also used to check for candidate completion at the end of the program as expressed by district office staff.

<b>Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice</b>	<b>Team Finding</b>
The unit designs and implements a planned sequence of coursework and clinical experiences for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills to educate and support P-12 students in meeting state-adopted content standards.	<b>Consistently</b>
The unit and its programs offer a high-quality course of study focused on the knowledge and skills expected of beginning educators and grounded in current research on effective practice. Coursework is integrated closely with field experiences to provide candidates with a cohesive and comprehensive program that allows candidates to learn, practice, and demonstrate competencies required of the credential they seek.	<b>Consistently</b>
The unit and all programs collaborate with their partners regarding the criteria and selection of clinical personnel, site-based supervisors and school sites, as appropriate to the program.	<b>Consistently</b>
Through site-based work and clinical experiences, programs offered by the unit provide candidates with opportunities to both experience issues of diversity that affect school climate and to effectively implement research-based strategies for improving teaching and student learning.	<b>Consistently</b>
Site-based supervisors must be certified and experienced in teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential.	<b>Consistently</b>
The process and criteria result in the selection of site-based supervisors who provide effective and knowledgeable support for candidates.	<b>Consistently</b>
Site-based supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.	<b>Consistently</b>
All programs effectively implement and evaluate fieldwork and clinical practice.	<b>Consistently</b>
For each program the unit offers, candidates have significant experience in school settings where the curriculum aligns with California’s adopted content standards and frameworks, and the school reflects the diversity of California’s student and the opportunity to work with the range of students identified in the program standards.	<b>Consistently</b>

**Finding on Common Standard 3: Met**

**Summary of information applicable to the standard**

The AESD New Teacher Induction Program has designed and implemented a planned sequence of coursework guided by an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Interviews with candidates and mentors verify that the ILP process is truly individualized and guides the new teachers to

create a focus that supports the implementation of research-based teaching practices that are appropriate to their unique teaching context. The Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services commented in her interview about the program's strong focus on ensuring that candidates' programs are highly individualized based on their unique needs. Mentors observe candidates' instruction and provide them with feedback to improve teaching and student learning. These areas of focus are based on elements of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs). Mentors and candidates verified that the induction process is structured to be personalized for the individual candidates based on their strengths, needs and teaching context.

Candidate's teaching assignments in AESD provide direct experience with students of diverse backgrounds and ability levels. AESD students have a variety of socio-cultural, racial, religious, ethnic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds. Candidates interviewed spoke of specific resources provided by their mentors to strengthen their instruction to English Learners. The special education candidates provided many examples of resources and support they received to meet the unique needs of their students.

The Atwater Elementary School District Human Resources staff and site administrators work together in the hiring of mentors. Each mentor holds a clear California teaching credential and has a minimum of five years of successful TK-8 teaching experience. One mentor holds an education specialist credential, and she supports the district's four special education candidates, and the program is currently looking for more special education mentors. Mentors verified that they are trained to help teachers assess themselves on the Continuum of Teaching Practice and to set goals based upon this assessment. All mentors meet at monthly forums where they receive professional development on mentoring and coaching. Mentors stated that they practice coaching conversations and how to provide actionable feedback from observations. The forums are facilitated by the program coordinator, and they allow mentors to collaborate and problem-solve with one another. Mentor training is monitored through the analysis of survey data. The program director formally evaluates the mentors as their direct supervisor. Survey data is utilized to determine mentor effectiveness. The program coordinator provides one-on-one in-person feedback to mentors twice each year.

In the ILP process candidates gather both qualitative and quantitative evidence of student achievement to document the positive effect of their practice on student success. One mentor stated the district is "data rich". This mentor works to ensure that candidates know how to access the data to inform their improvement and measure student success. Mentors explained how they utilize both the analysis of achievement data and student work in the process of coaching new teachers.

<b>Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement</b>	<b>Team Finding</b>
The education unit develops and implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at both the unit level and within each of its programs that identifies program and unit effectiveness and makes appropriate modifications based on findings.	<b>Consistently</b>
The education unit and its programs regularly assess their effectiveness in relation to the course of study offered, fieldwork and clinical practice, and support services for candidates.	<b>Consistently</b>
Both the unit and its programs regularly and systematically collect, analyze, and use candidate and program completer data as well as data reflecting the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services.	<b>Consistently</b>
The continuous improvement process includes multiple sources of data including 1) the extent to which candidates are prepared to enter professional practice; and 2) feedback from key stakeholders such as employers and community partners about the quality of the preparation.	<b>Consistently</b>

**Finding on Common Standard 4: Met**

**Summary of information applicable to the standard**

Interviews verified that the AESD New Teacher Induction Program has developed and implemented a continuous improvement cycle that involves gathering program data from multiple groups of stakeholders throughout the year. Data is collected from stakeholders (candidates, mentors, and site administrators) in midyear and end of year surveys. Candidate CSTP Pre- and Post-Assessments, exit activities, Professional Development Evaluations and the Commission’s Completer Survey results provide further data and evidence which the program analyzes for the purpose of program improvement. Administrators stated that survey results were shared with them at their monthly meetings, and they also had the opportunity to provide input to the program. Administrators valued this process and one stated that she would follow up with additional supports aligned with the needs that the candidates expressed.

Interviews with candidates, mentors, site administrators, steering committee members, and program leadership provided evidence of the regular examination of the data available. One completer commented, “I always felt heard. We would make a request or suggestion and we’d see it happen.” Another candidate commented that they would make a recommendation or share a need and within a week or so support and/or training would be available.

Candidates and Mentors both stated that within the context of the mentoring relationship, CSTP self-assessments would inform their goal setting and professional learning plans.

Mentors regularly review survey data at mentor forums and program adjustments are made based on the feedback. Mentors use end of year data to plan support and professional



development for the following school year. Additionally, mentors utilize survey data as well as anecdotal data from their observations to plan just-in-time trainings focusing specifically on needs they are hearing or seeing. For example, at the time of the visit, a ‘Report Card’ training was being planned to support teachers in their first experience with this process.

The steering committee members reported that they review survey data regularly to collaborate with program leaders to make program improvements. Program leaders also utilize survey data to determine mentor effectiveness and to be certain that candidates are receiving appropriate support.

<b>Common Standard 5: Program Impact</b>	<b>Team Finding</b>
The institution ensures that candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting state adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission adopted competency requirements as specified in the program standards.	<b>Consistently</b>
The unit and its programs evaluate and demonstrate that they are having a positive impact on candidate learning and competence and on teaching and learning in schools that serve California’s students.	<b>Consistently</b>

**Finding on Common Standard 5: Met**

**Summary of information applicable to the standard.**

The AESD New Teacher Induction Program is structured to ensure that candidates receive the support and resources necessary to develop into highly effective, reflective practitioners who have significant impact upon the learning of AESD students. Evidence provided demonstrates that candidates develop the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully educate and support all students. Interviews of candidates verify that mentors provide regular resources and support for them as they work with English Learners and students with special needs. There are multiple opportunities for candidates to develop best practices. Full release mentors provide weekly guidance and resources to candidates in support of their ILP goals, as well as offering regular just-in-time support. Candidates reported that their mentors are extremely accessible and quick to respond to requests for resources or support.

The Induction program seeks to further the instructional initiatives of the district which are based on students’ needs. Site administrators stated that the program strongly aligns with district and site initiatives which focus on engaging students, promoting depth of knowledge and developing instructional objectives that lead to student learning. The program is successful in retaining high quality teachers that meet the needs of their unique student population. The program provided evidence of data that indicates that the induction program

has an impact on candidates' development in the CSTPs, in their instructional practices and in their abilities to meet the instructional initiatives of the district and their students' needs. The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources stated that the district has a 92% retention rate. The superintendent offered evidence that because of the strong support their new teachers receive, the academic performance of candidate's students parallels that of high caliber veteran teachers.

Individual learning plans are designed to support the candidates' individual professional development needs. Candidates review their growth on the CSTPs at mid-year and year-end during both years of the program. Based on the assessment of their growth, with guidance from their mentors they create and revise their ILP to plan to ensure further professional development. Evidence reviewed clearly demonstrates that candidates consistently show growth in the CSTPs through their induction experience.

Survey results from stakeholders' groups in the past two school years have shown that the induction program has had an impact on candidates' growth in the CSTPs, in district instructional initiatives and in teaching English learners and students with special needs.