

**Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of Findings of the
Accreditation Visit for Professional Preparation Programs at
Turlock Unified School District
Professional Services Division
June 2020**

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the Initial Institutional Approval Focused site visit conducted at **Turlock Unified 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 | Met |
| 2) Candidate Recruitment and Support | Met |
| 3) Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice | Met |
| 4) Continuous Improvement | Met |
| 5) Program Impact | Met |

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 Focused Site Visit Team Report**

Institution: Turlock Unified School District

Dates of Visit: May 11-13, 2020

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 status of the institution was based upon the following:

Preconditions

All Preconditions have been determined to be aligned.

Program Standards

All program standards were found to be met.

Common Standards

All common standards were found to be 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**.

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

In addition, staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.

Interviews Conducted

| Stakeholders | TOTAL |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Candidates | 46 |
| Completers | 34 |
| Employers | 15 |
| Institutional Administration | 4 |
| Program Coordinators | 1 |
| Mentors | 32 |
| Professional Development Providers | 3 |
| Credential Analysts and Staff | 1 |
| Advisory Board Members | 10 |
| TOTAL | 146 |

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

Background Information

Turlock Unified School District (TUSD) is composed of 16 schools with over 14,000 students, 2,293 staff including 781 certificated staff. The district has nine TK-6 schools, two middle schools, four schools that serve 9-12 grade students and one adult school. The district’s LCAP reports that the district is 1:1 with technology devices. Twenty-five percent of TUSD’s students are English learners, 63% socioeconomically disadvantaged, 11% students with disabilities and 66% unduplicated students.

| | TK-12 Students | Certificated Staff |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Total Number | 14,284 | 781 |
| Hispanic | 58.4% | 25.7% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0.6% | 0.5% |
| Asian American | 5.3% | 2.1% |
| Pacific Islander | 0.5% | 0% |
| Filipino | 0.2% | 0.5% |
| African American | 2.0% | 0.8% |
| White | 30.4% | 68.2% |

| | TK-12 Students | Certificated Staff |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Two or more Races | 1.4% | 1.4% |
| No response | 1.2% | 0.5% |

Education Unit

Turlock Unified School District was [provisionally approved](#) by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing in September 2016 and the Teacher Induction program was approved by the Committee on Accreditation in [June 2017](#). Teacher Induction is the only Commission-approved program sponsored by TUSD. The teacher induction program began operating in the 2017-18 year.

A program coordinator leads the teacher induction program. The induction program is housed in Human Resources and the induction program coordinator reports to the assistant superintendent for Human Resources. There is an advisory council that meets four times a year. The council has members who are assistant superintendents, directors, site administrators, mentors, university partners, and induction program completers.

Table 1: Program Review Status

| Program Name | Number of Program Completers (2018-19) | Number of Candidates Enrolled (2019-20) |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Turlock Unified School District | 23 | 44 |

The Visit

The visit proceeded in accordance with accreditation protocols as a fully technology assisted site visit.

PRECONDITION FINDINGS

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

PROGRAM REPORT

Teacher Induction

Program Design

The Turlock Unified School District (TUSD) Teacher Induction Program is integrated into the Human Resources department of the district with leadership from a coordinator. The coordinator has direct contact with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, as a supervisor, who represents the program at the cabinet level. The coordinator collaborates with the Business office and Curriculum and Instruction as needs of the program fall into each category. An advisory team is convened consisting of the coordinator, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, site leaders, mentors, university partner, and candidates. Frequent communication with mentors is provided through email, regular meetings and newsletters.

The TUSD Induction Program facilitates an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) process with two inquiries per year supported by mentoring, a triad with the supervisor, observations, and professional learning seminars. Feedback is provided to the teacher candidate through the ILP process including observations by the mentor, instructional coaches, and program coordinator.

As a new program, modifications are made annually as well as throughout the year. Feedback is gathered from stakeholders, data is processed by the coordinator or within the various stakeholder groups. Two significant modifications in the last two years have been in reducing the required submissions and required activities by candidates and the format of the ILP. Seminars have been reduced in length and have shifted focus to the ILP process, mentoring time and choice professional learning. The ILP has been streamlined and enhanced with additional guidance to provide candidates a road map through the inquiry process which is related to their individual context.

Stakeholder input is gathered through meetings, exit tickets, surveys and informal conversations. This is an area the program continues to develop as the need for hard data to support anecdotal data is uncovered.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

All candidates begin the teacher induction program during the TUSD New Teacher Academy introduction to Induction which incorporates the Preliminary Transition document. Candidates who cannot attend the Academy are oriented individually. An exploration of context includes the self-assessment on the Continuum of Teaching Practice, a triad meeting with the principal, candidate and mentor, and beginning the ILP. Cycle 1 is guided by the ILP and supported through mentor support and observations. Cycle 1 concludes with a self-assessment using the

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, outcomes data including assessment and survey results, the completion of interviews with district leaders, the program coordinator, candidates, completers, mentors, employers, professional development providers, credential analyst, and partners, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Turlock Unified School District.

Finding on Common Standard 1: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

A review of evidence and interviews with a variety of stakeholders confirm that the Turlock Unified School District's induction program has the infrastructure in place to operate an effective educator preparation program characterized by a research-based vision of teaching and learning. Document review, interviews with program leadership, mentors, site administrators, district administration, teacher induction candidates and completers confirm the strong commitment that Turlock Unified School District has to guide and serve future educators. The superintendent expressed a well-developed vision for the importance of mentoring and developing beginning educators. She stated that she considers the Induction program to be an essential component of the district's recruitment and retention plan. Induction is included as a planned action in the District's Local Control and Accountability Plan. The superintendent believes that the induction program allows them to fully align the candidate's induction experience with district priorities and initiatives. She stated, "Teachers will come because of what they see, they will stay because of what they feel. We need to make sure they feel supported and affirmed." Her commitment to promoting new teacher success is evidenced in several ways. She personally meets with every new hire. A question she asks them is, "What do I have to do to keep you here in Turlock?" She also makes a goal to visit the classroom of every teacher in the district and she begins with the new teachers. Additional cabinet members interviewed expressed similar views affirming a strong commitment to new teacher support and development.

The Induction Program director is highly respected and valued by the district leadership. They give her the authority to fully implement the Induction program. In interviews, every constituent group expressed their appreciation for the committed and conscientious leadership she provides. She is exceptionally attentive to details and ensures that every facet of the program is administered flawlessly.

The program's advisory board meets four times a year and its membership is representative of a wide range of stakeholders. This group is actively involved in data analysis and decision making. Interviews provided evidence of processes to collect and analyze survey data to inform decision making and program improvements in Turlock USD. Interviews with site administrators, mentors, and TUSD induction leadership confirm that candidate growth is promoted through individually tailored professional development, strong support and guidance from the program director and skilled individual mentoring.

The program director and the district's credential advisor work very closely to ensure that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements. However, the team did not find evidence of systems and structures in place to ensure that any additional renewal requirements for candidates are met before the clear credential recommendation is made. The program is small, and the communication is strong between the director and the credential

analyst. A more formal structure is needed to guarantee that every individual has met all requirements.

| Common Standard 2: Candidate Recruitment and Support | Team Finding |
|--|---------------------------|
| 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. | Consistently |
| 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. | Consistently |
| Appropriate information and personnel are clearly identified and accessible to guide each candidate’s attainment of program requirements. | Consistently |
| 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. | Consistently |

Finding on Common Standard 2: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Document review and interviews with leadership, mentors, site administrators, and completers confirmed the Turlock Unified School District induction program accepts applicants with clearly defined criteria. Interviews with leadership establish that the district is purposeful in the recruitment of teachers who reflect the demographics of their student population. They have a strong partnership with their local California State University, and this has facilitated an opportunity for the recruitment of a well-qualified diverse teacher force.

Interviews with program stakeholders confirm appropriate personnel are available to support each candidate through the two-year induction process and ensure successful entry into the profession. All stakeholder groups expressed appreciation for the program director’s personal and detailed monitoring of the progress of each candidate throughout their induction journey.

The credential technician at the district office has established clear procedures in partnership with the program director to ensure that Induction candidates are identified at the point of hire and enrolled in the program within program standard expectations. A strong partnership between the program director and the credential analyst has facilitated an accurate process for admission and completion of the program.

| Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice | Team Finding |
|--|---------------------|
| 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 students and the opportunity to work with the range of students identified in the program standards. | Consistently |

Finding on Common Standard 3: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The Turlock USD Induction Program has designed and implemented a planned sequence of coursework centered around the inquiry cycles guided by an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The ILP is organized around the Plan, Teach, Reflect, Apply cycle and is designed to develop the knowledge and skills of effective educators. The ILP process guides the new teacher to develop individualized “wonderings” to create a focus that guides the research and implementation of research-based teaching practices. These areas of focus are based on elements of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs) and are informed by administrator input at a triad meeting, and mentor guidance at the beginning of the induction process. Candidates interviewed spoke of the value of having their mentor’s guidance in the selection of this focus, with one interviewee stating, “My mentor guided me to hone in on the consistency of my routines and classroom management. I was very fortunate to have that additional support.”

The ILP process is fully integrated into each candidate’s classroom experience and can be tailored to their individual context. In addition, candidates gather both qualitative and quantitative evidence of student achievement in order to document the positive effect of their practice on student success, and reflect on videos of their teaching in order to further reflect on their practice. One interviewee noted, “The ILP process brought to light research-based practices, which made me hyper-aware of best practices.”

The program also provides twice yearly release time for candidates to observe teachers in similar settings to allow new teachers to access new tools and strategies to implement in their classrooms. These observations were widely praised by candidates in interviews as one of the most beneficial aspects of their induction experience. Candidates also attend seminars guided by the program coordinator, which allows them time to get information about program requirements, collaborate with peers, and have structured work time with their mentor.

The program has established clear criteria for selection of mentors and works closely with both the Turlock Human Resources staff and site administrators in the recruitment, recommendation, and matching of mentors. Mentors are trained in mentoring skills, including learning focused conversations, and practice these skills in a series of monthly seminars led by the coordinator. Mentors who were interviewed spoke of the value of these conversations when supporting their candidates, and one interviewee said, “Pausing, listening, has been huge

- you think you are here to fix things but really I am here to get them to develop themselves. It has impacted not only my mentoring, but my teaching and working with colleagues as well.”

In order to provide formative feedback to mentors on their practice, each mentor records videos of their work with their candidate, reflects upon it, then shares it with a colleague, who then gives them input. The videos are then submitted to the program coordinator, who provides additional feedback to the mentor. The program also seeks input from candidates on their mentor’s practice, and if there are issues that need to be resolved, the coordinator works quickly with all parties to resolve them. Most candidates were very happy with their mentor’s support, but they also reported that they knew that “Denise would jump right in to help us if we needed her.”

There are several systems in place for review of candidate progress and growth. ILPs are submitted twice per year, at the end of each semester, and a group of mentors review each submission, using the ILP rubric. These mentors participate in a calibration activity, then work in pairs to evaluate each ILP, with a process in place if there are any disagreements in scoring. The coordinator keeps an ongoing record of all candidates’ progress in each of the induction requirements, and communicates regularly with both candidates and mentors to keep abreast of any issues or needs by either party. Participants interviewed in both groups stressed repeatedly that if they needed any additional support, their needs were addressed quickly by the coordinator. One interviewee stated that the program coordinator, “has the heartbeat of the program” and another said, “If we had any questions, I knew that the program coordinator would answer them right away.”

| Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement | Team Finding |
|--|---------------------|
| 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. | Consistently |
| 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. | Consistently |
| 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. | Consistently |
| 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. | Consistently |

Finding on Common Standard 4: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The Turlock USD Induction program has developed and implemented a continuous improvement cycle that involves gathering program data from multiple groups of stakeholders throughout the year. These data sources include surveys, seminar and training evaluations, exit interviews, ILP reviews and mentor feedback. The Advisory Committee is regularly involved in data analysis and district leadership, mentors, Professional Development providers and candidates are kept apprised of all program improvements. In multiple interviews participants shared that the program director responded quickly to the data and feedback gathered, and made ongoing program improvements, which were then shared with stakeholders. One mentor interviewed noted that not only was feedback actively sought after each seminar, but the data was always shared at the beginning of the next meeting and improvements were already in place, based on their responses.

Candidate and mentor surveys, along with program completer data, have led to changes to seminar structures, the number of induction videos required, professional development choices, and mentor training improvements. One candidate interviewed said that she had asked the program director that “seminars be more tailored to SpEd needs” and a cohort system was then created to allow candidates with similar credentials and contexts to share ideas and provide support for each other. ILP reviews and Exit Interviews provide another source of data for program improvement, and both mentor and candidate interviewees shared that the ILP document itself has evolved, based on candidate needs, to include examples of responses and structural changes to better facilitate classroom implementation.

| Common Standard 5: Program Impact | Team Finding |
|--|---------------------|
| 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. | Consistently |
| 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. | Consistently |

Finding on Common Standard 5: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The Turlock USD Induction program is structured to ensure that candidates get the support and resources necessary to be adequately prepared to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support all students to be successful. There are multiple opportunities for candidates to develop best practices. Mentors provide guidance and resources to candidates in support of their ILP goals, candidates observe multiple teachers in

similar settings and participate in collaborative discussions in seminars, and attend district sponsored professional development. This learning and classroom implementation is then documented in their ILPs and in video submissions. District leadership members communicated a strong message of district support for the induction program, with one stating that “Support is a priority. The induction program helps the new teachers to be successful, and their success is directly tied to student success.”

Interviews with all groups of stakeholders included numerous ways that the program has a positive impact on not only candidate learning and competence, but also on the mentors’ professional learning and growth. An interviewee noted, “Being a mentor makes you step your game up. It made me more conscious of my own choices as I reflected with my candidate”. Candidates shared that the data they collected as part of their inquiry cycle allowed them to see the direct benefit of their learning and growth on their students. One candidate noted that he tracked his students’ IEP goal progress, and was able to see how his teaching impacted that progress.

District leadership members shared that the induction program helps to “bring new teachers into the district culture”, and that the structure of the program supports district Professional Learning Communities, which they noted is an important aspect of the Turlock USD culture. They all agreed that the Turlock USD Induction Program was “an incredible benefit to students, teachers, and leaders.”

INSTITUTION SUMMARY

Every facet of the review process provided strong evidence of a robust and meaningful induction experience for candidates in the Turlock Unified School District’s teacher induction program. This new program has been thoughtfully grounded in research and best practices. Document review and interviews verified that candidates are strongly supported by mentors who are well prepared to coach them to success in meeting their ILP goals. District leaders not only actively support the program, but they were part of the group of leaders who sought out institutional approval for a district run program. The program’s director has the full confidence and support of her leaders and she leads the program with great care and conscientiousness. In every interview held, the constituents praised the director for her willingness to ensure that every aspect of the program was delivered with care and each individual was valued and supported.

The TUSD Induction Program facilitates an ILP process with two inquiries per year supported by mentoring, a triad meeting with the site administrator, observations, and professional learning seminars. All program activities are designed so that candidates have choices, therefore every induction activity is appropriate to the context of the teacher candidate and based on individual need. Interviews verified that candidates find each component of the process valuable. They expressed appreciation for the seminars as a supportive opportunity to network with other colleagues both novice and veteran. Recent changes to the program have eliminated prescribed

professional development, and this has been received very positively by the candidates. Candidates expressed great appreciation for the opportunity to observe exemplary veteran colleagues. This was overwhelmingly described as a highlight of the experience. They also had overwhelming praise for the support and expert coaching provided by their mentors. One candidate stated his/her mentor was the reason he/she stayed in the profession.

The program has an active advisory board made up of a wide range of stakeholders, including current and former candidates, mentors, university partners, as well as district and site administrators. They offer feedback on program survey data and offer the director guidance in making program improvements. The program's director has been extremely attentive to feedback and has made adjustments and improvements regularly.

The team found that all common and program standards were met in the current operation of the program. Several interviewees expressed their appreciation for the culture in the program that allowed them to take risks and grow through their failures. One candidate said, "This is just a moment, it doesn't define me. It's a journey of growth." This growth mindset permeates the culture of the Turlock Unified School District's induction program and drives candidate success.

Focused Site Visit in Stage IV of Initial Institutional Approval

During Stage IV of the initial institutional approval (IIA) process, the new institution hosts a Focused Site Visit (FSV). The team is composed of program leaders for that type of program as well as experienced Board of Institutional Review members. Because this FSV 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 a short time, three years for the Turlock Unified (TUSD) Teacher Induction program. The program leaders who make up the FSV team have many, many years of experience among them. As the team conducted interviews and made decisions about the program standards and accreditation recommendation, the team also identified some areas where the program and TUSD could benefit from the advice and recommendations from the experienced program leaders. Since the Turlock USD Teacher Induction program is the first institution to host a Focused Site Visit in Stage IV of the Commission's Initial Institutional Process, the focused site visit team and state consultant believe that the benefit to the district and its educator preparation program supports the inclusion of these suggestions as an addendum to the team report. The areas that TUSD and the Teacher Induction program should consider once the Commission confers full institutional approval are identified below.

Focused Site Visit Team's Reflections for Future Program Growth

Mentoring and the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) are very powerful when fully integrated
The ILP serves as a "road map for the candidates' Induction work." The power of the ILP being fully integrated into the work of the mentor and new teacher is that the ILP grows across the year, documents the work the new teacher undertakes during the year, and is not an assignment to be completed by the new teacher near the due date. The ILP informs the ongoing work of the mentor and candidate. Learning focused conversations should be utilized to integrate the ILP fully into the mentoring relationship. The submission for review is a selection of evidence documenting the growth and development of the new teacher.

Quality of the ILP Rubric

The team knows that when the ILP Rubric addresses issues of depth of thought, connection of student data to goals, to the plans to address goals, and reflection on the data collected, and documents the specific next steps the teacher will take, the rubric is a powerful guiding document for the new teacher and mentor's work in the induction program. This rubric, shared from the beginning of the program, should serve to guide the mentor/candidate partnership.

Calibration for all mentors to understand the ILP rubric. Mentors need to understand the expectations of the support that should be provided to new teachers in completing the ILP

Powerful teacher induction programs benefit from all mentors having a common understanding of the ILP, the rubric that will be used to judge the ILP, and a shared plan for supporting new teachers in developing, modifying, and implementing the ILP. The ILP needs to be both the map and the diary of the new teacher's professional learning across the year.

ILP data including student data: collection, analysis, and used for program improvement

It is clear that the program coordinator carefully reviews the ILPs, exit tickets from events, feedback from mentors, new teachers, and administrators as well as other information she collects. Formalizing the collection, review and analysis of data and including one or more of the groups identified below in the review process would multiply the institutional understanding of the induction program, new teacher needs, and perhaps even areas of growth for the district as a whole.

Consider including:

- all mentors,
- instructional coaches,
- advisory council members,
- site administrators, and/or
- district leadership.

Focused Site Visit Team's Reflections for Future Unit Growth

Collaborative leadership includes a variety of individuals analyzing data and suggesting program and unit modifications

A strength of a mature induction program is the authentic active involvement of a variety of individuals in program development, evaluation, and growth. A program coordinator can develop a very effective induction program initially but the number of ideas to improve the program increases exponentially as additional individuals become full partners in the analysis of data, identification of possible modifications, and responsibility for the program.

More formal review of data that is collected in the ILP

Individual learning plans collect TK-12 student data as well as goals, learnings and positive impact. A more purposeful, systematic review and analysis of this data could be very powerful in guiding the induction program as well as the district in its forward steps.

Formalize the Evaluation and Recognition of Mentors

Mentors grow as they receive formative feedback from program leaders, other mentors, and their teachers. Formalizing the process for collection of feedback for mentors, the process to share the feedback and document mentor knowledge and skills, and developing a process for recognizing exemplary mentors strengthens a teacher induction program.