

Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of Findings of the Accreditation Visit for Professional Preparation Programs at

Cupertino Union School District

Professional Services Division

June 2022

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at **Cupertino Union 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
Accreditation Team Report**

Institution: Cupertino Union School District

Dates of Visit: May 16-18, 2022

Accreditation Team Recommendation: Accreditation

Previous History of Accreditation Status

Accreditation Reports	Accreditation Status
November 2014	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 candidates, program completers, site administrators, professional development presenters, Learning Lab hosts, mentors, K-12 community partners, teering committee members, district leadership, and district administration. 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 **met**.

Program Standards

All program standards for the Teacher Induction program offered by Cupertino Union School District were **met**.

Common Standards

All Common Standards were **met**.

Overall Recommendation

Based on the fact that the team found all standards for the Teacher Induction program were met and 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.
- Cupertino Union School District be permitted to propose new educator preparation programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- Cupertino Union School District continue in its assigned cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Accreditation Team

Team Lead:

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Program Reviewer:

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Common Standards:

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Staff to the Visit:

Miranda Gutierrez
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Documents Reviewed

Common Standards Submission
Program Review Submission
Common Standards Addendum
Program Review Addendum
Candidate Advisement Materials
Accreditation Website
Exit Interview Documentation
Non-discrimination Policies
Mentor Training Materials
Record Keeping Spreadsheet/Table

Candidate Files
Assessment Materials
Candidate Handbooks
Survey Results
Performance Expectation Materials
Precondition Responses
Accreditation Data Dashboard
District's Strategic Plan
Satisfaction Surveys (candidate, mentor)
Collaboration Log

Interviews Conducted

Stakeholders	TOTAL
Candidates	30
Completers	24
Institutional Administration	8
Program Coordinators	1
Mentors	12
Site Support Providers	13
Observation Hosts (Learning Lab)	6
Site Administrators	12
Credential Analysts and Staff	2
Steering Committee	7
K-12 Community Partners	6
Professional Development Presenters	6
TOTAL	127

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

Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, Cupertino Union School District (CUSD) is comprised of 19 elementary schools, one K-8 school, and five middle schools located throughout the city of Cupertino and portions of Sunnyvale, San Jose, Saratoga, Los Altos, and Santa Clara. The district employs approximately 1,400 full-time equivalent staff and serves a diverse student population of approximately 14,500 that encompasses over 20 nationalities and 50 languages. CUSD is the largest elementary school district in Northern California.

Education Unit

The CUSD Teacher Induction program is housed in the district’s Human Resources Division. It is the only Commission-approved program at Cupertino Union School District. The program is led by one program director, a full-time release program mentor. CUSD has 26 site support providers, 12 mentors, and 5 induction coaches/mentors/TOSAs (Teacher on Special Assignment) for the program.

Table 1: Program Review Status

Program Name	Number of Program Completers (2020-21)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2021-22)
Teacher Induction	27	51

The Visit

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

The visit proceeded in accordance with all normal accreditation protocols.

PRECONDITION FINDINGS

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

PROGRAM REPORT

Teacher Induction

Program Design

Cupertino Union School District (CUSD) teacher induction program clears general education and special education preliminary credentials. The program is under the guidance of the Human Resources Division of the district. Daily operation of the program is the responsibility of the induction director. The program matches candidates with induction mentors with the same or similar credentials.

The single district program supports a diverse group of beginning teacher candidates assigned to work in elementary and middle schools in both general education and special education classroom settings. Candidates are enrolled in the program to earn a recommendation for a clear Multiple Subject, Single Subject, or Education Specialist credential. This program connects candidates with trained mentors and job-alike site support providers that regularly support candidates in using their preliminary program Individualized Development Plan to advance skills and best practices as measured by the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). Each candidate's individual induction journey is structured by the Demonstration of Completion document, which houses their Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). Within the ILP, candidates document their learning through a self-assessment of the CSTP and setting professional goals, including data-driven inquiry action plan experiences in each year of induction. The program design provides a clear and defensible pathway to a clear credential recommendation.

Regular communication occurs between the program advisors and the induction director; the instructional coaches, induction director, and the educational services department; and between the induction coaches, induction director, and steering committee.

The robust CUSD teacher induction program is built upon a multi-tiered support structure. This support system includes induction coaches, district mentors, site support providers, instructional coaches who serve as program advisors, a program advisor/lead mentor, and a program director. The steering committee is composed of stakeholders including the associate superintendent of instruction, the induction program director, directors of human resources, credential analysts, mentors/instructional coaches, middle and elementary site administrators, recent completers, and representation from a local institution of higher education. Interviews and documentation confirm that the program uses various means in which to communicate with stakeholders.

The CUSD induction program assigns a full-time release instructional coach as a mentor to each candidate within the first 30 days of enrollment and ensures a match based on credential. To

further support candidates at their assigned school sites, candidates are provided a site support provider that shares job-alike roles and experiences and is available for ongoing support with site initiatives and to help candidates with “just in time” support needs. The combined support is documented regularly on logs. Mentors agree to provide a collaborative, supportive, and confidential relationship with candidates in order to provide effective personalized support for each candidate’s growth. Based on candidate interviews, candidates expressed that their mentors are supportive, helpful, flexible, patient, and knowledgeable about district resources. The Commission’s Accreditation Data Dashboard (ADD) data reports show that the majority of teacher candidates believe they are well-matched with mentors and their relationship as “highly collaborative.” Interviews further validated these sentiments with numerous candidate references to their gratitude for the mentors. When asked about the CUSD induction program’s greatest strength, candidates unanimously reported that it was the mentors that were most beneficial.

The CUSD induction organizational chart depicts the relationship between the human resources department, program advisors, mentors, and coaches, as well as site administrators and the site mentors (provide induction support), site support providers (support for all new hires), induction teacher candidates and Learning Lab hosts (veteran teachers who candidates can observe). The induction program director and the credential analyst collaborate to determine eligibility of candidates for the induction program and provides the recommendation for a clear credential for completers.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

The design of the CUSD induction program is to meet the individual needs of each candidate and promote their growth as a professional educator. The goal is to bridge the gap between university coursework and the teacher of record in a classroom of diverse learners. The foundation of the course of study is the CSTP.

Through the CUSD induction program, candidates can rely on the continuous support from their mentors through conscientious monitoring of their progress demonstrated by a variety of program components including ILP reflections, colleague observation opportunities, Inquiry Action Plan (IAP) observation feedback, curriculum support, and communication with the site administrator through a triad meeting. Mentor logs and the Principal Triad Collaborative Assessment Log document confirms all these are occurring for candidates.

CUSD’s induction program utilizes the CSTP to identify candidate professional practice strengths and areas for growth using the Continuum of Teaching Practice rubrics. The Demonstration of Completion document, which houses the ILP and the IAP, provides expected timelines and includes multiple opportunities for candidates to identify problems of practice, set goals, reflect, self-assess on the CSTP, create an action plan, and analyze student work and assessment data throughout their two-year program. Early Completion Option candidates benefit from an individualized approach of building on prior experiences to guide their induction experience and are expected to address all six CSTP in their modified timeline in the program.

The ILP clearly outlines and guides candidate expectations for SMART goals, the action steps the candidate will take to meet said goals, and agreed-upon evidence that would demonstrate growth toward each goal. ADD data reveals that 86% of candidates successfully began developing goals on their ILP within the first 60 days of the program. Reflection and coaching are continuously facilitated throughout the year. IAPs are structured to follow the teaching cycle of plan, teach, assess, reflect, and apply, and to support candidates in professional practices. The CUSD induction program mentors support these cycles with candidates in weekly meetings by determining research steps and finding resources for the candidate. The mentor/candidate reflective conversations are at the heart of the candidate's growth as evidenced by numerous interview anecdotes of times mentors fully supported candidates' needs. "It really comes down to the mentors," stated one very grateful candidate. They went on to share, "Every meeting starts with, 'how are things going?' They continue to check in. They walk you through it all to make it less overwhelming."

Administrator input through a specific lens of the candidate's school site and teaching assignment, mentor-facilitated reflection, and planning conversations, as well as use of the candidate's preliminary preparation program experiences are considered to help the candidate determine appropriate ILP goals. Beginning of the year triad meetings directly connect the candidates to the development of ILP goals that are aligned with their evaluation goals, and it was noted that the ILP is not used for evaluation purposes.

The CUSD Learning Labs and professional development offerings support candidates in developing skills for best practices, addressing district and site initiatives, and effectively implementing adopted curriculum. Completers shared in interviews that the Learning Labs "were awesome." Professional development (PD) is offered in a variety of ways, providing, as one PD presenter shared, "that personalized touch" to support teachers in developing best practices.

Assessment of Candidates

The CUSD induction program uses informal and formal assessments to make sure candidates are completing the program requirements. The informal assessments include mentors working confidentially with candidates as they guide reflective conversations on the CSTP and ILP growth goals. Mentoring is designed to support candidate growth on CSTP and effectiveness through reflection, feedback, just in time support, review, and collaboration on the ILP. This collaborative work with their mentors on the ILP includes action research, professional development, implementing strategies, and self-assessments using the CSTP.

The CUSD induction program ensures candidates are assessed frequently and in a variety of ways. Candidate self-assessments include rubric-based assessment of themselves on all elements on the CSTP and the Continuum of Teaching Practice three times per year, which is explicitly structured on the Demonstration of Completion document and facilitated during Learning Labs. The Collaborative Assessment Log tracks data over time and alerts the program to provide additional support when needed.

The demonstration of completion document identifies mandatory components for induction program completion, as do the CUSD induction website and handbook, and the candidate letter of commitment. The induction checklist verification form and progress monitoring documents further support the CUSD requirements and expectations for satisfactory completion of induction and lead to a recommendation of a clear credential.

Each candidate submits requirements online throughout the year with mid-year checks to make sure candidates are on track for completion. The induction program verifies that each candidate satisfactorily completes program requirements. The induction director makes the professional clear credential recommendation by completing a Verification of Completion of Induction form for each candidate and submits to the Commission.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, outcomes data including assessment and survey results, the completion of interviews with candidates, program completers, site administrators, professional development presenters, Learning Lab hosts, mentors, K-12 Community Partners, Steering Committee members, district leadership, and district administration the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the CUSD Induction Program.

INSTITUTION SUMMARY

Collaboration, communication, and coordination are seen as strengths across all groups involved in Cupertino Union School District’s teacher induction program, across all internal departments, and with regional induction programs and university partners as well. These relationships and the intentional collaboration are highly valued by all stakeholders. The Induction Steering Committee is a group of stakeholders that analyzes collected data and provides input into program design four times annually. The result is a program that is already well-designed to fully support new educators but strives to continuously improve on an ongoing basis.

The district is currently experiencing declining enrollment and with this comes budgetary restrictions; however, the district places a clear priority on supporting the induction program, and all district leadership who were interviewed believe it is one of the most relevant attractions when hiring new educators. As one leader said, “It is one of the biggest assets of the district. It is a district capacity building program with a network that only serves to strengthen our district.”

All second year and Early Completion Option candidates participate in a culminating event titled Evidence of Growth. Each candidate prepares and shares a presentation on their induction journey and highlights the growth they have made with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). CUSD employs a variety of mentors/instructional coaches/TOSAs all to provide layered support for the district’s new teacher candidates, though some candidates and administrators (and accreditation team members) struggled to understand the system of support with so many different groups of people with similar titles.

COMMON STANDARDS FINDINGS

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
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.	Consistently
The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders in the organization, coordination, and decision making for all educator preparation programs.	Consistently

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
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.	Consistently
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.	Consistently
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.	Consistently
Recruitment and faculty development efforts support hiring and retention of faculty who represent and support diversity and excellence.	Consistently
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.	Consistently
The education unit monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 1: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

CUSD induction program has a clear research-based vision. Data is shared across stakeholders within the induction program (candidates, mentors, leadership team) and program changes are made based on the analysis of that data. The induction program is supported by the institution as evidenced through the documentation submitted and interviews. The induction director shared that although the district has undergone some budgetary restraints due to declining enrollment, “the induction program has always had true support from the board and superintendent.”

Professional development providers and program leaders expressed that CUSD’s induction program strives to retain teachers and achieve educational equity by grounding their practice in ongoing cycles of inquiry focused on progression towards mastery of the CSTP. Candidates report that their mentors are highly capable and supportive, effectively balancing long-term analysis of teaching practice through the ILP with “just in time” support. Interviews with professional development providers and teachers on special assignment revealed that qualified personnel facilitate clinical experiences.

A variety of interviews confirmed that sufficient resources and support are allocated for the effective operation of the program. All stakeholder groups interviewed expressed gratitude to the program leadership for their capacity to communicate clearly and effectively, its systems of support, and its responsiveness to feedback. Both the program director and the lead mentor are skilled and proactive in their support, seemingly always available, and receptive to ideas on improving the induction experience.

In order to ensure that only qualified candidates are issued a clear credential the induction program leadership monitors the progress of candidates through ILP checkpoints as well as collaboration logs.

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, P-12 site administrators, and completers confirmed the CUSD’s induction program accepts all applicants with clear criteria including multiple measures of candidate qualifications. Interviews with human resources clearly show the purposeful recruitment of employees to diversify the work pool.

Interviews with a broad base of stakeholder groups provide compelling evidence that the induction program is committed to providing a meaningful, job-embedded induction experience designed to meet each candidate’s unique needs. Mentors reported a clearly defined process is in place to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies. Candidates and program completers consistently shared praise of their mentors and the support they receive during the induction experience. Numerous stakeholders expressed much appreciation of the induction program director, program advisor/lead mentor, support staff, and mentors who continuously provide ongoing clear and precise communication of expectations concerning all aspects of the program. The program director and program advisor/lead mentor take an active role in guiding and supporting each candidate’s induction experience, including timely and specific feedback.

Credential analysts stated in interviews that if candidates have a preliminary credential, they are notified of the induction program and this information is shared with the program director. Information about induction is available on the district and induction program websites and also in the induction handbook. Credential analysts also advise candidates and offer support with satisfying statutory requirements while they are enrolled in induction.

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
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.	Consistently
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.	Consistently
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.	Consistently

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
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.	Consistently
Site-based supervisors must be certified and experienced in teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential.	Consistently
The process and criteria result in the selection of site-based supervisors who provide effective and knowledgeable support for candidates.	Consistently
Site-based supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.	Consistently
All programs effectively implement and evaluate fieldwork and clinical practice.	Consistently
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.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 3: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

CUSD’s induction program offers a quality course of study focused on the knowledge and skills expected of beginning educators that is centered on the needs of the candidates. The course of study focuses on a planned sequence of professional learning opportunities that align with standards of program quality and effectiveness. Professional learning offerings include district initiatives, curriculum, and candidate survey feedback. Candidates are able to engage in the new teacher institute, teacher learning days, workshops, and Learning Labs that offer candidates options to support their growth goals and professional development. Site administrators are trained in equity and diversity content and in turn bring this learning forward to both mentors and candidates. Completers of the program expressed in interviews that the highlight of their induction journey was the reflective teaching practices that they still utilize in their teaching.

Mentors are selected through a defined criteria with emphasis on knowledge about beginning teacher development. Mentor support is individualized for each candidate. Mentor and candidate matches are determined according to credentials held, as well as, when possible, grade level and/or subject area. Mentor training is provided by instructional coaches and professional development providers that include Mentoring Matters and Cognitive Coaching

models. In addition to a mentor, candidates are assigned a Site Support Provider (SSP) who provides site-specific, “just in time” support on a weekly basis or more often, as needed. An instructional coach shared that candidates having both a mentor and site support mentor is a unique concept to the CUSD induction program and that it is a strength to the overall support and success of the candidates.

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 completion 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 program’s continuous improvement includes multiple sources of data from stakeholders. Data from mentor and candidate self-assessments, end of year surveys, and exit interview data are used to assess and provide specific data on the program effectiveness, course of study, support services provided, and candidate competence.

Using the Common Standards and CSTP, the CUSD Steering Committee meets quarterly to review and analyze program data. This committee reflects on successes, areas for growth, and makes recommendations for program improvement.

Interviews with stakeholders including program leadership, mentors, candidates, and university partners confirmed that feedback is regularly used for program improvement. A steering committee member who was an induction participant and is now a mentor stated that the program was more prescriptive for candidates years ago. Based on program data, it has been redesigned with the candidate's individual needs in mind. Some of the program changes that were highlighted were added professional development that support candidate growth goals around English Language Development, special education, and technology.

Also, candidates expressed their love for the Learning Labs that were added that provide an opportunity to observe other teachers in their same grade levels, get feedback, and collaborate while in the program.

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 CUSD induction program uses candidate exit interviews, professional development feedback, candidate anecdotal surveys regarding induction experience and support, as well as site administrator anecdotal surveys regarding services to ensure candidates are meeting state-adopted academic standards.

Interviews with stakeholder groups confirm the existence of a quality induction program designed to ensure candidates demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully educate all students in CUSD.

CUSD’s teacher induction program is having a positive impact on the teaching and learning in their schools. Survey data indicated that 95.3% of the candidates in the CUSD teacher induction program planned to continue with teaching. Additionally, 40% of current CUSD school site administrators are former CUSD induction program participants which highlights the program’s dedication to teaching, learning, and leading.