

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

Stella Charter Middle Academy

Professional Services Division

May 2023

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at **Stella Charter Middle Academy**. 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 with Stipulations** 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 with Concerns
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 Program	6	5	1	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

**California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Committee on Accreditation
Accreditation Team Report**

Institution: Stella Middle Charter Academy

Dates of Visit: March 5-7, 2023

Accreditation Team Recommendation: Accreditation with Stipulations

Rationale:

The unanimous recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** 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

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

Program Standards

All program standards were met except Standard 5, which was **Met with Concerns**.

Common Standards

All Common Standards were met except Standard 2, which was **Met with Concerns**.

Overall Recommendation

Based on the fact that the team found all standards for the Teacher Induction Program were met except Standard 5, which was **Met with Concerns**, and all Common Standards were met except Common Standard 2, which was **Met with Concerns**, the team recommends **Accreditation with Stipulations**.

The team recommends the following stipulation:

Within 6 months Stella Middle Charter Academy will provide evidence of:

1. a clearly defined process to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies; and,
2. clear, documented procedures for candidates to repeat portions of the program as needed.

In addition, staff recommends that:

- Stella Middle Charter Academy's response to the preconditions be accepted.

- Stella Middle Charter Academy be permitted to propose new credential programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- Stella Middle Charter Academy be assigned to a color cohort on the 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 Program

Accreditation Team

Team Lead:

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Programs Reviewers:

Raina Arellano
Ventura County Office of Education

Common Standards:

Roxanna Stern
Santa Barbara Unified School District

Staff to the Visit:

Michele Williams-George
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Documents Reviewed

Precondition Responses
Common Standards Submission
Program Review Submission
Common Standards Addendum
Program Review Addendum
Professional Development Materials
Candidate Advisement Materials
Accreditation Website
Faculty/Mentor Vitae
Candidate Files

Performance Expectation Materials
Candidate Handbook
Mentor Handbook
Site-Supervisor Handbook
Survey Results
Accreditation Data Dashboard
Kiano Platform
Candidate ILP
Candidate Orientation Materials
Mentor Orientation Materials

Interviews Conducted

Constituencies	TOTAL
Candidates	27
Program Completers	9
Site Principals	8
Institutional Administration	7
Program Coordinators	2
Mentors	18
Professional Development Providers	4
Credential Analysts and Staff	1
Advisory Board Members	9
TOTAL	85

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

Stella Middle Charter Academy is a tuition-free public charter school serving grades five through eight. It is one of eight other tuition-free public charter elementary, middle, and high schools associated with Bright Star Schools. Stella Middle Charter Academy is located in the southwest Los Angeles community of West Adams/Baldwin Village. The other Bright Star campuses are located in South Los Angeles, Koreatown, and the San Fernando Valley. In total, these campuses serve over 3,600 TK-12 students, 92% of whom receive free and reduced-priced lunch, 19% are multilingual learners, and 12% of the population receives special education services.

Stella Middle Charter Academy is in Stage V of the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process to become the program sponsor for the Greater Los Angeles Schools Teacher Induction Consortium (GLASTIC). Currently, the consortium consists of the nine Bright Star Schools; however, once fully approved, the institution intends to broaden the consortium and offer teacher induction services to other schools in the surrounding area.

Many Bright Star teachers attended the teacher induction program offered by Los Angeles Unified School District when Bright Star schools founded GLASTIC in 2009 out of a desire to supplement that program and build a formalized culture of mentoring and coaching across the consortium. When LAUSD ended free induction for teachers at authorized public charter schools in 2015, Stella Middle Charter Academy took the opportunity to begin the initial institutional approval process to offer their own induction program, building from the foundation of mentoring and coaching they had already established. They chose to initially extend services to only other Bright Star Schools, until they solidified their induction program. By creating an environment in which educator growth is facilitated, Stella Middle Charter Academy, as the program sponsor for GLASTIC, aims to promote teacher retention and career longevity within Bright Star Schools and the surrounding educational community.

Through the GLASTIC consortium, Stella Middle Charter Academy supports institutional awareness of equity, inclusion, and diversity (EID). The school itself integrates multilingual and multicultural values that reflect the lived experiences of their diverse student population. The core values of Integridad (means “we need to be the best version of ourselves”), Ubuntu (means “our humanity is shared, and we value kindness”), Kohyang (means “hometown and encourages us to build meaningful connections”), and Growth (means “having a mindset that allows us to achieve excellence”) are proudly displayed on the school website. The primary Bright Star Schools website includes a public commitment to anti-racist practices, lifting up BIPOC voices; reviewing and changing organizational practices for diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging; and implementing curriculum and programming to ensure a just, equitable, and inclusive experience for every student and staff member. In order to support equity, inclusion and diversity in the greater educational community, Stella Middle Charter Academy provides a “Race and Equity Toolkit” on its website that is freely accessible to the public.

Education Unit

Stella Middle Charter Academy began Stage I of the Initial Institutional Approval process in

December 2016 to become a program sponsor of a teacher induction program. The school completed Stage II in January 2019; received Institutional Approval (Stage III) in February 2019; and received provisional approval (Stage IV) in November 2019. Stella Middle Charter Academy began implementing the teacher induction program (Stage V) the following academic year (2019-2020). The institution has one cohort which has fully completed the program and is currently providing support to a second (Year 2 candidates) and third cohort (Year 1 candidates). Table 1 provides data regarding enrollment and completion of current cohorts. During this provisional approval period, Stella Middle Charter Academy has been providing teacher induction services to all nine Bright Star Schools campuses under the umbrella of the GLASTIC consortium. If approved by the Commission and assigned to a color cohort, the consortium will expand to include other institutions.

According to the California School Dashboard, Stella Middle Charter Academy has 460 fifth through eighth grade students including 28.8% English Learners and 96% socioeconomically disadvantaged learners. The larger consortium of nine schools serves over 3,600 students from transitional kindergarten through 12th grade. According to the Bright Star Schools website, the consortium has an 82% graduation rate which is on par with the state graduation rate of 84% for the same year. Of consortium graduates, 80% go on to attend two- or 4-year institutions of higher education. Table 2 provides teacher candidate demographic data from the Commission’s Accreditation Data Dashboard spanning the provisional approval period.

The induction program relies on The New Teacher Center (NTC) for much of its initial professional development material and coaching design. This includes using Kiano as the information management platform. Stella Middle Charter Academy then takes NTC’s material and information and adapts them to meet the needs of teacher induction candidates in the GLASTIC consortium.

Table 1: Enrollment and Completion Data

Program Name	Number of Program Completers (2020-21)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2021-22)
Teacher Induction	34	43

Table 2: Candidate Demographic Data Over the Provisional Approval Period

	Percentages
Hispanic/Latinx	42.8%
White	21.6%
Asian	15.6%
Two or more races	10.1%
Black/African American	7.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%
Declined to state	1.3%
Female	61.2%
Male	37.5%
Nonbinary	1.3%

The Visit

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this site visit was conducted virtually. The institutional constituencies 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

The vision of Stella Middle Charter Academy is to “develop self-reflective, lifelong educators who facilitate standards-based instruction that results in excellence in student achievement and who believe in a holistic approach to teaching in order to graduate students who become leaders that enrich our communities.” This vision was both visible in documentation and audible in interviews. The Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) Planning Guide prompts on the ILP itself, and activities outlined on the Scope and Sequence of Mentoring and Tool Use all displayed evidence of this vision, showing consistent reflection on practice and data analysis, and consciously building an understanding of students to identify and implement instructional best practices.

While the program director is responsible for program processes, she actively collaborates with the vice president of people development and the lead mentor to integrate varying perspectives. Program documents and interviews confirmed that communication within the administration occurs weekly and communication with the advisory board occurs quarterly. The advisory board consists of program leadership, two higher education partners, a site principal, a human resources leader, a head of schools, a mentor, a teacher candidate, and the district deputy superintendent of schools. The advisory board meets to provide input regarding alignment across candidate practice, mentoring protocols, and program processes. Multiple documents and interviews confirmed each meeting is anchored in data collected during mid- and end-of-year surveys and other specific program tools. This information is used by the advisory board to assess the quality of services provided to students, candidates, and school sites. One example of the effectiveness of regular communication with the advisory board is ILP changes made as a result of the advisory board’s analysis of data. The Program Standards report and interviews with advisory board, mentors, and program administration all confirmed identified ILP changes were a positive result of advisory board involvement.

Mentors, candidates, and site principals meet three times each year to discuss induction program expectations, candidate progress, and site needs. It was evident from both interviews with these constituents and a review of program materials that consistent reflection on practice and data developed a better understand of student needs and appropriate instructional best practices.

Several sources showed mentors can be asked to apply or choose to apply on their own. According to interviews and job descriptions, the director of teacher induction and

development is responsible for recruiting and hiring mentor teachers. The director selects qualified mentors through a screening and interview process using the mentor job description which includes state requirements but then goes above and beyond these minimum requirements to include "...a growth mindset and a history of being a reflective practitioner. ...passion for serving students, including students with diverse abilities, culture, language, ethnicity, and gender orientations. ...and authentic dedication to serving our communities." Before being hired, credentials are verified by the credential analyst for the applicants for the mentor positions.

Once hired, evidence and interviews confirmed mentors and candidates are paired first by content area then credential area. All efforts are made to pair mentors with candidates on the same school site. To stay current in content knowledge and coaching skills, mentors engage in a professional training series with eight full release days over two years that include listening and feedback skills, the coaching cycle, developing inquiry questions, knowing students, analyzing student work, and learning to use NTC Tools housed in the Kiano system. Mentors confirmed an equity strand is consistently intertwined within these sessions. Mentors also engage in "In-Field Coaching" once a year. Mentors shared that the in-field coaching is "in the moment" support to assess and guide their mentor practice. The coaching also includes an observation of a standard weekly meeting of the mentor with their candidate. Mentors are given feedback during a post observation discussion.

Program surveys and multiple interviews confirmed that mid-year and end-of-year surveys are completed by candidates, mentors, and site principals. Interviews also confirmed program administration reviewed survey data during advisory meetings and with candidates and mentors during forum meetings. Data trends from candidates about the mentoring experience are shared twice a year during mentor forums to determine mentor effectiveness as well as effective program improvement, and the impact of previous program changes.

Information for site principals regarding their role in the induction program and relevant resources is available in the Administrator Handbook. Interviews with site principals showed they understood their responsibilities, and eagerly participated in the induction process.

Review of a sample Mentor Log, the Scope and Sequence of Mentoring and Tool Use documents, and interviews with mentors all confirmed candidates and mentors receive dedicated time to observe and reflect on candidate instructional practices and analyze student work. Mentors reported they use the mentor log to record their weekly meeting with candidates and have access to various NTC developed tools which they select based on specific candidate need.

Review of the Mentor Training Materials Timeline of Events for Mentors and interviews with mentors and program administration affirmed that training extends beyond the two years of the initial mentor training and includes participation in five forums throughout the year. Evidence also showed mentors have time to connect with each other as colleagues around their mentoring practice and with candidates to discuss candidate needs as it relates to the topic of

the forum. During interviews, mentors confirmed this was a consistent part of each forum. Mentors and candidates also reported that topics of forums are based on both data trends and candidate or mentor requests gathered from surveys.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

The program provides candidates with the opportunity to develop and reflect on job embedded, self-selected goals throughout the year. This opportunity for individualized growth was affirmed in interviews with both mentors and candidates. It was also evident on the Yearly Overview tab of the Mentor Dashboard and prompts on the ILP such as ‘additional goals based on professional interest’ and ‘semester goals’ based on self-assessment of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP).

Candidates consider various data points in developing their ILP goal. Both candidates and mentors shared that candidates use the Danielson rubric, the CSTPs, their Individualized Development Plan (IDP), and input from the site principal in developing their ILP goal. This process was confirmed in interviews with relevant constituents. During these interviews, candidates and mentors also reported they used both teacher-created and premade tools from NTC to monitor progress toward each of their goals as well as review and analyze student data during their weekly meetings. Several constituent groups shared that mentors, candidates, and principals meet throughout the year to discuss what is going well, ensure induction meeting times are protected, and arrange opportunities for candidates to observe other teachers.

The program provides multiple professional learning opportunities each year for candidates. These include professional development through individual consortium school sites, NTC, Los Angeles Unified School District, and Los Angeles County Office of Education. Opportunities for professional development were affirmed in the Candidate Handbook and during interviews.

The program has a clear description for Early Completion Option (ECO) eligibility, criteria, and requirements. This information as well as the process for reviewing and approving applicants is outlined in the Candidate Handbook.

Assessment of Candidates

Candidates, mentors, site principals, and program leadership all described a robust and consistent system of candidate assessment, of which candidates are informed upon entry into the program and which is consistently revisited during one-on-one time with mentors. Interviews as well as evidence in the ILP Planning Guide confirmed candidates self-assess, track, and receive informal feedback from their mentors about their growth on the CSTPs three times a year. This informal feedback comes in the form of scheduled candidate-mentor meetings. The ILP provides a year’s worth of growth as multiple data points to which the candidate can consistently refer for determining their progress, modifying ILP goals, and choosing professional learning opportunities.

Interviews and review of the ILP Completion form confirmed that each candidate receives formal feedback about progress toward successful completion of program and any additional

credential requirements twice a year. As candidates document activities on their ILP, the same activities are automatically populated on the ILP Completion Form. According to documentation and multiple constituent interviews, an end-of-year celebration is held where second year candidates share their learnings and are informed of steps for applying for their clear credential if they have completed all program and state requirements or next steps if they have not.

Reviewers found evidence of a clear credential recommendation process outlined in the Candidate Handbook. Program leadership shared during interviews that each candidate's ILP Completion Form feeds into a larger, primary document that is shared with the director of teacher induction and development and the credential analyst. Two candidates shared during interviews that the credential analyst made them aware of unmet requirements by email. One had to complete the RICA and the other had to complete the TPA; both were offered resources such as test preparation books and/or classes that would be reimbursed if they spent out of pocket funds. Program completers also shared that program administration made it clear to candidates that if fees associated with the application were a barrier, the program would assist them. Interviews with program completers confirmed they received email communication from either the credential analyst or program leadership at the end of the second year of induction to confirm their clear credential status or alert them to any outstanding completion requirements.

Although documents and interviews provided evidence of program extension policies, a process for requesting a leave of absence, and a grievance policy regarding program completion, reviewers found no evidence of a clearly documented procedure in place for candidates to repeat portions of the program as needed.

Findings on Standards

After reviewing institutional reports, supporting documentation, outcomes data including assessment and survey results, as well as completing interviews with candidates, completers, mentors, site principals, as well as program and institutional administrators, the team determined that all program standards are met for Stella Middle Charter Academy except for the following:

Standard 5: Determining Candidate Competence for the Clear Credential Recommendation – Met with Concerns

Reviewers found no clearly documented procedure in place for candidates to repeat portions of the program as needed.

INSTITUTION SUMMARY

Stella Middle Charter Academy was provisionally approved in November 2019 and is in its third year of implementing the Greater Los Angeles Schools Teacher Induction Program (GLASTIC). Communication and collaboration were clearly strongholds throughout the institution and can also be used to describe the teacher induction program. Based on a review of curriculum vitae, program leadership, mentors, and district personnel were well qualified for their positions and interviews showed them to be committed to the mission and vision of the induction program which is rooted in research-based practice. Institutional expenditures showed the program is well supported and, in one interview, was described by administration as “a permanent fixture in our budget and a priority in our institution.” When asked how the teacher induction program fits into the larger vision and goals of the district, another administrator responded, “It’s part of our DNA. We want all of our teachers to be involved in their own inquiry process based on their own goals, and to see teaching as a practice and a profession.”

Throughout the site visit, it was clear that the director of teacher induction and development and vice president of people development provide the program structure and work closely with employers to ensure appropriate support for candidates. Multiple constituents described them both as accessible and involved, and noted they communicate regularly and promptly with candidates and mentors. Mentors and the program leadership are also accessible and provide “just in time” and long-range professional development and support as was identified by the candidates themselves. Less frequently but still regularly, the program’s advisory board provides input, feedback, and advice on the operations of the program based on program data provided via feedback surveys and ILP evidence gathered multiple times during the academic year. All personnel who support the teacher induction program described it as a thoughtful and well-designed program which provides for the success of candidates through advising and mentoring. While the overall program appeared well organized and implemented, reviewers were unable to find evidence of a clearly defined process to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies.

The unit engages in a thorough assessment system which ensures continuous improvement and provides for systematic reflection of candidates’ progress based on multiple sources of data generated during cycles of inquiry around candidates’ teaching practices. Interviews and direct evidence provided during the site visit affirm the success of induction candidates in both accreditation activities (ILP completion) and in the performance of their job responsibilities. A strong focus on and commitment to supporting new teachers to make a positive impact as educators was clearly communicated throughout program constituent interviews. Pupil release days afford induction candidates ongoing professional development opportunities, topics of which are based in the program’s values of effectively serving a diverse population of students, creating a sense of belonging for students and staff, and ensuring students meet content standards. These program foci have fostered a strong commitment by candidates to student learning, to their own professional growth, and to participate in the wider educational community.

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
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

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
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

Stella Middle Charter Academy prepares educators on a solid foundation of research and educational theory firmly rooted in the work of adult learning researcher Malcolm Shepherd Knowles and includes alignment with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), the state adopted academic standards, and the Instructive, Collaborative, Facilitative Framework out of the New Teacher Center (NTC). Interviews with every constituent group confirmed the director of teacher induction and development, the lead mentor, and mentors all provide supervision of candidates within a supportive, purposeful, and collegial community. The program has an advisory board which meets quarterly and is composed primarily of program and district leadership, mentors, a site principal, participating teachers, and two members from the higher education community. The purpose of the advisory board was described by an advisory board member as “a second set of eyes on programmatic data to support meeting our goals.”

Collaborative partners confirmed that program leadership integrates the NTC Peer Consultancy Protocols with other internally developed procedures. Program leaders noted they attend the annual induction conference to learn more about induction and consult with other Cluster 4 colleagues in preparation to offer their program to schools and districts outside the GLASTIC consortium. The deputy superintendent, vice president of people development, and chief business officer affirmed that they provide leadership and appropriate financial and human resources for professional development and robust program support. Unit and program policies showed that the unit hires and retains faculty who represent and support diversity, and that additional recruitment efforts are in place, such as a residency program with a local university, to recruit individuals who represent the diversity of the student population and surrounding community.

The program is staffed with a full-time induction director, a full-time lead mentor, and 31 mentors trained for field-based support and supervision. A review of program documents and interviews with the credential analyst confirmed that each recommendation for a credential is organized, analyzed, and reviewed appropriately.

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.	Inconsistently

Finding on Common Standard 2: Met with Concerns

Summary of information applicable to the standard

A review of program documentation confirmed the Stella Middle Charter Academy intentionally recruits and admits eligible candidates to the teacher induction program based on specific and clear criteria that include multiple measures of candidate qualifications. The induction program handbook includes the eligibility criteria of first- and second-year teachers with a California preliminary credential or out-of-state credentials with 0-2 years teaching experience. Interviews with program personnel demonstrated that the director of teacher induction and development works closely with both the human resources department and the credential analyst throughout the year to identify new hires and current employees who hold or have recently received a preliminary credential, thus making them eligible for induction.

Interviews with program personnel showed Stella Middle Charter Academy purposefully recruits candidates to diversify the educator pool via efforts such as recruiting at institutions of higher education that serve diverse student populations. The program admits all teachers who hold preliminary credentials or who have less than two years of out of state experience. A review of program documentation and interviews with site principals and mentors confirmed the program provides the support, advice, and assistance to promote candidates’ successful entry and retention in the profession. Examples of support included weekly mentoring meetings as well as triad meetings held three times during the year between the candidate, their mentor, and the site principal.

A review of program documentation, specifically program handbooks and the Mentor Orientation slide deck, indicated that appropriate information and personnel are clearly identified to guide each candidate’s successful attainment of program requirements.

Interviews with program personnel further indicated that, twice per year, the director of teacher induction and development reviews candidates’ progress toward completion of program requirements and emails both the candidate and the mentor with a summary of that review. Although no documented candidate support policy was found, candidates and program completers shared that if they needed anything, they would first turn to their mentors and that they knew they could also contact the director of teacher induction and development if they needed additional support.

Rationale for the Finding

While a review of program documentation and interviews with constituencies confirmed that evidence regarding progress in meeting competency and performance expectations is consistently used to guide advisement and candidate support, reviewers were unable to find evidence of a clearly defined process to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies.

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
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

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
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 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

Stella Middle Charter Academy provides a researched-based, two-year process for new teachers to move seamlessly from pre-service to employment in a logically sequenced structure that includes goal setting, coaching, and reflection. Their approach is firmly rooted in the work of key educational researchers and includes alignment with the CSTPs, the state adopted academic standards, adult learning theory, and NTC’s Instructive, Collaborative, Facilitative Framework.

The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant constituents in the organization, coordination, and decision making for their induction program. One way this is accomplished is through mid-year and end-of-year survey data from candidates, mentors, and site principals. Interviews with site principals and advisory board members described a planned process of data review where program leaders, mentors, and advisory board members review data, make changes based on that data, and then survey constituents again to see if the changes resulted in improvement. This recursive process guides the organization and decision making of this induction program.

There are multiple ways program personnel regularly and systematically collaborate with colleagues in PK-12, college and university settings, and members of the broader educational community. For example, program leadership and PK-12 partners reported program leadership

actively participates in Cluster 4 meetings and the bi-annual National Program Leader Network hosted by NTC. Evidence for mentors included collaboration with inclusion and ELD specialists as well as site-based math and science instructional coaches. Standing collaborative meetings between mentors and site administrators take place every six weeks.

Sufficient resources are allocated for a director and full-release lead mentor to coordinate the program and to provide professional development and support for all candidates and mentors. During interviews, mentors reported participating in learning experiences including 4 full-day workshops over a two-year period (with three supplemental forums per year) and additional mentor forums five times per year. Site principals confirmed that they provide protected time for candidates and mentors to participate together in professional development. In addition, online tools and systems were described in multiple interviews as effective for candidate support. It was clear the unit leadership has the authority and institutional support required to address the needs of this educator preparation program.

The job description for the position of director of teacher induction and development, which is responsible for the professional development and supervision of mentors and candidates, included a master’s degree and at least five years of successful K-12 teaching experience with diverse student populations. Program hiring policies and interviews showed mentors are selected through a rigorous application process that requires proven effective teaching experience using PK-12 content standards and knowledge of diverse cultures. Candidates shared in interviews that they feel well supported by qualified mentors who are current in their knowledge and professional practice.

The credential recommendation process is closely monitored by the director of teacher induction and development, the lead mentor, and the credential analyst. ILPs are reviewed systematically at both the middle and end of each year. Upon completion of the program, each candidate’s ILP has been reviewed multiple times and program requirement completion has been confirmed by a minimum of two people. The credential analyst makes the credential recommendation to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing after confirming all other requirements have been completed.

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

Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement	Team Finding
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

Stella Middle Charter Academy implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at both the unit level and at the program level, gathering program data from candidates, mentors, and site principals throughout each program year. A review of survey data and multiple interviews confirmed that the program collects input from key constituencies in a variety of ways such as mid-year, end-of-year surveys for leadership, mentors, and candidates; program completer surveys; professional development evaluations; and audits of tools used in the program. Interviews and documents confirmed the director of teacher induction and development shares survey data with district leadership, the advisory board, candidates, and mentors to seek constituent feedback and guide program improvements. The advisory board is made up of individuals with varied roles and perspectives, which informs a range of program modifications. Interviews with the members of the advisory board confirmed the recommendations they make upon reviewing data are then shared with the relevant program constituencies, to seek their input prior to finalizing changes. The leadership team then implements those changes accordingly and later seeks input from constituencies regarding the effectiveness of those changes. This is strong evidence of a continuous and interactive data-driven improvement process at all levels.

Candidates, mentors, and site principals described several program improvements which resulted from this process. These included a number of modifications to the ILP to integrate more relevance for Education Specialist credential holders and more clarity for all candidates. Other modifications to the ILP facilitated data collection for the program. Outside of the ILP, another program change was based on data from triad meetings. Program leadership saw from their data that the triad meetings were not seen as impactful to teacher practice, so they gathered data from teachers, mentors, and site principals, and proposed to the advisory board a new triad meeting template that would elicit more relevant conversations. To support that change, program leadership now attends site principal meetings to share aggregate data regarding candidates’ reported needs, so triad conversations would be sure to address effective teaching practices.

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.

Interviews and documentation reviews confirmed Stella Middle Charter Academy’s induction program ensures candidates are prepared to educate and support students in meeting state adopted standards through an inquiry process which allows teachers to demonstrate growth in self-selected areas within the CSTPs by using an intentional alignment of program activities with CSTP elements. A candidate’s ILP includes inquiry cycles with action research and opportunities for reflection guided by mentors and feedback from site principals which provide professional development and professional growth. Candidates and program completers shared that the year-end colloquium demonstrates candidates possess the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively educate and support all students. Interviews with candidates, mentors, site principals, and program leadership confirmed that, via repeated inquiry cycles throughout the year, candidates use evidence including self-assessment, mentor input, and administrator input to assess candidate progress on the CSTPs.

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. This was confirmed by a review of documents and interviews with several constituencies including candidates, mentors, site principals, and advisory board members. Each constituency stated that inquiry tools, CSTP reflections, and data from mid-year and year-end surveys demonstrated teacher, student, and mentor growth. Higher education partners shared that Program Quality Survey data demonstrated candidates found the program to be supportive, relevant, and timely and that it positively shifted their practice. Higher education partners further emphasized that the program has impacted inclusion teachers in a positive way by connecting their compliance work to pedagogy. Mentors stated that the program made candidates want to stay in teaching.

Interviews with leadership confirmed a positive impact of the program is that the program design is structured to provide opportunities for candidates to develop practices that allow for maximum effectiveness in classroom teaching. Another positive impact was confirmed through candidate, mentor, and site principal interviews. All of these constituencies noted that assessment of candidate progress toward mastery of the CSTP aligned well with site principals' observations of candidate progress, particularly as related to student achievement and the site's focus on continuous improvement and closing achievement gaps. The program also positively impacts mentors as experienced teachers, by providing an opportunity for them to grow in their own practice while also supporting new educators. Mentors stated during interviews that they learned from their candidates and from the tools used in the program, which positively impacted their own students' learning.