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## Action

### *Educator Preparation Committee*

### **Initial Institutional Approval – Stage III: Consideration of Provisional Approval for Helix Charter High School**

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item presents, as part of the Initial Institutional Approval process, Helix Charter High School’s responses to the Common Standards for consideration and possible Provisional Approval by the Commission.

**Recommended Action:** That the Commission grant Provisional Approval to Helix Charter High School and set the Provisional Approval period to be three years.

**Presenter:** Elizabeth de los Santos, Consultant, Division of Standards, Accreditation, and Workforce Investment

### **Strategic Plan Goal**

#### ***Educator Preparation and Advancement***

- **Goal 1.** Educator preparation programs hold candidates to high standards and adequately prepare them to support all students by using culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining practices in equitable, inclusive, and safe environments.
  - A. Set and uphold rigorous standards for educator preparation programs
  - C. Enact a rigorous accreditation process that ensures programs meet standards and are effective in preparing educators for public schools

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## **Initial Institutional Approval – Stage III: Consideration of Provisional Approval for Helix Charter High School**

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### **Introduction**

This agenda item presents, as a part of Stage III of the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process, Helix Charter High School's (HCHS) responses to the Common Standards for consideration of Provisional Approval by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission). All Common Standards responses have been reviewed by a team of Board of Institutional Review (BIR) members and have been determined to be aligned. If granted Provisional Approval, the next step in the IIA process would be the review of the HCHS's responses to the Teacher Induction Program Standards by a BIR team. When these reviewers determine that the program standards are aligned, the proposed program will be considered for Initial Program Approval by the Committee on Accreditation (COA). Then, at that time, if approved, the institution may offer the program for the three-year provisional period as specified by the Commission.

### **Background**

California Education Code §44372(c), provides the Commission with the authority to accredit institutions to offer programs that lead to a credential to serve as an educator in California's public schools. The Commission has established the IIA process whereby an institution seeking to offer educator preparation program(s) in California must satisfactorily complete five stages to be approved as a program sponsor.

The submission of Common Standards and Preconditions is Stage III of the five-stage process, as indicated in the highlighted column of the chart on the following page. Completion of this stage of the process results in a determination by the Commission of whether to grant the institution Provisional Approval. Provisional Approval permits the institution to offer an educator preparation program once the program standards are found to be aligned by a BIR team and the proposed program is approved by the COA in Stage IV.

### Five Stages of the Initial Institutional Approval Process

Helix Charter HS is seeking approval of Stage III in order to be eligible for Stage IV as highlighted and italicized in the chart below.

IIA Process	Stage I - Prerequisites	Stage II – Eligibility	<i>Stage III – Provisional Approval</i>	Stage IV – Initial Program Approval	Stage V – Full Approval
<b>Purpose</b>	Ensures legal eligibility of institution in California  Ensures institution understands requirements of Commission’s accreditation system	Ensures that institution has capacity to sponsor effective programs	<i>Ensures institution meets all Common Standards</i>	Ensures all proposed programs meet all relevant program standards and program-specific preconditions	Program operates for 2-4 years and hosts a provisional accreditation site visit
<b>Institutional Requirements</b>	Must: 1. Have legal eligibility 2. Attend Accreditation 101 with institutional team	Submit responses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 Eligibility Criteria</li> <li>• Initial Program Preconditions</li> <li>• General Precondition #9</li> </ul>	<i>Submit responses to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Common Standards</i></li> </ul>	Submit responses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program-Specific Preconditions</li> <li>• Program Standards</li> </ul>	Institution Must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect data</li> <li>• Host provisional site visit</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed By</b>	Staff	Staff	<i>BIR</i>	<b>Preconditions: Staff Program Standards: BIR</b>	Site Visit Team & COA
<b>Authority</b>	Staff	Commission	<i>Commission</i>	COA	Commission
<b>Decision</b>	Determine Eligibility for Stage II	Eligibility: 1. Grant 2. Deny	<i>Provisional Approval:</i> 1. <i>Grant</i> 2. <i>Deny</i>	Program(s): 1. Approve 2. Deny	1. Grant Full Approval 2. Grant Full Approval & Remand to COA to Address Stipulations 3. Continue Provisional Status for 1 Year to Address Stipulations 4. Deny Approval
<b>IIA Status*</b>	Not Approved	Not Approved	<i>Provisional Approval**</i>	Provisional Approval***	Full Approval

\*At conclusion of stage \*\*Institutionally approved but cannot offer programs \*\*\*May begin offering approved program

### **Helix Charter High School**

Helix Charter High School (HCHS) is located in La Mesa in San Diego County and serves approximately 2,550 students. HCHS was founded in 1951 and maintains a Charter Governing Board consisting of student representatives, parents, staff, and community members empowered to make school wide policy decisions. In 2022, HCHS was designated as an Exemplary High Performing National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Secretary of Education and aims to provide a comprehensive education that prepares all students to graduate college-ready and equipped to reach their personal and academic potential.

HCHS completed Stages I and II of the IIA process and was approved as an eligible institution by the Commission at its [February 2026](#) meeting. This action allowed HCHS to move forward to Stage III in which responses to the Common Standards were submitted, as linked in this item. Currently, HCHS seeks Provisional Approval from the Commission. If approved, HCHS will seek COA approval of their proposed Teacher Induction program.

### **Stage III: Review to Determine Alignment with Common Standards**

In keeping with the Commission's process for IIA, HCHS submitted its responses to the Common Standards. Two BIR members reviewed the Common Standards and have found them to be aligned.

Summaries of HCHS's responses to the Common Standards are included in this agenda item. [HCHS's complete Stage III Common Standards submission](#) is available on their website.

It is an important reminder that although the responses to the Common Standards in this agenda item can provide some indication of the design of the program the institution proposes to offer, detailed program information will be provided in the institution's responses to the Teacher Induction Program Standards in Stage IV of the IIA process. The responses to the program standards will be reviewed by a team of BIR members to determine alignment. Once the review team has determined that the responses are aligned to the program standards, an item will be brought to the COA for consideration of Initial Program Approval for the proposed program. If approved, the Provisional Approval period will begin, and the institution may begin offering the program.

## Common Standards Responses

*All responses to the Common Standards have been deemed, by a team of BIR reviewers, to be aligned. Beneath each Common Standard is information and excerpts from HCHS's Common Standards submission. The [2015 Common Standards](#) are provided here as a reference.*

### **Common Standard 1 – Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation**

The mission and vision of Helix Charter High School's (HCHS) Teacher Induction program are informed by research on mentoring, instructional coaching, and effective teaching practice. Key research-based influences include Laura Lipton's work on mentoring and coaching stances, which emphasize structured conversations and gradual release of responsibility, and Jim Knight's Impact Cycle, which informs the program's goal-setting processes and cycles of inquiry. The program is designed to align with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) and support effective implementation of California's adopted academic content standards and curricular frameworks. The program also aligns with Helix's Instructional Framework to ensure coherence between induction, site-based professional learning, and schoolwide expectations for high-quality instruction.

Faculty, instructional personnel, and internal and external constituents are involved in the organization, coordination, and decision-making of the program. The program design committee is led by the induction director and includes a human resources manager, higher education faculty member, teacher induction mentor, and union representative. Feedback from constituents, including candidates and mentors, will be solicited and reviewed by the committee to review program effectiveness and inform program design changes.

HCHS states that it will ensure that instructional personnel regularly and systematically collaborate with colleagues from the broader educational community. The program director attends the San Diego County Office of Education (Cluster 7) regional meetings, which provide opportunities to collaborate with other induction leaders, share best practices, review updates to state requirements, and engage in problem solving related to candidate support and program implementation. HCHS will also send the program director and all mentors to the annual California Teacher Induction Conference.

Resources for the effective operation of the proposed Teacher Induction program have been provided through budget allocation from the Helix General Fund for a program director position, annual stipends for mentors, substitute teacher coverage, hourly compensation for curriculum development, instructional supplies and resources, and professional development costs. The program will be housed within the HCHS Professional Development Department. Mentor teacher recruitment will be conducted through a transparent application process open to all qualified educators at HCHS. Mentors will be selected based on a record of instructional excellence, commitment to equity, and capacity to support adult learners. Candidates will be assigned to mentors primarily based on same subject and credential areas. The program director will be responsible for monitoring candidate progress and verifying completion of all program requirements, while the human resources manager will make the final credential recommendation to the Commission.

### ***Common Standard 2 – Candidate Recruitment and Support Preparation***

HCHS has stated that it is committed to recruiting and supporting candidates in the proposed Teacher Induction program to ensure their success. The program will accept all candidates who meet the minimum criteria, which includes holding a California preliminary credential (Multiple Subject, Single Subject, and/or Education Specialist) and being employed as a teacher of record at HCHS for no less than 50% time in a teaching assignment that matches the subjects and/or grade levels of the preliminary credential. As a long-term strategy, HCHS will recruit internally through three efforts to develop future educators: a Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway for Helix Charter high school students interested in a teaching career, a pathway for college students and career changers in HCHS’s part-time academic coach and instructional aide program, and a pathway for full-time classified staff to complete student teaching while working part-time. HCHS will support teachers by offering the program at no cost to candidates.

Candidates will be provided with appropriate information about the program and qualified personnel to guide their success in the program. Candidates will receive information through a program website, handbook, and individual and group meetings. Mentors will take primary responsibility for guiding candidates through the induction program, ensuring that they meet all program requirements. The program director will regularly communicate with candidates and provide additional support as needed. Candidate progress will be monitored utilizing the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), which includes goal setting, two inquiry cycles, observations, reflections, and professional learning documentation. All submissions are housed and tracked in a dedicated Canvas course. Mentors will review candidate work for evidence of competency attainment, and the program director conducts a secondary review to ensure consistency and quality of candidate work and mentor feedback. Progress data, rubric results, mentor observations, and submission trends are analyzed to guide advisement and, when needed, adjustment of ILP goals and supports.

### ***Common Standard 3 – Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice***

The proposed site-based Teacher Induction program will provide candidates with opportunities to experience issues of diversity that affect school climate and implement research-based strategies for improving teaching and student learning. All professional learning at HCHS centers on inclusion and accessibility as outlined in the Helix Instructional Framework. As part of the new teacher onboarding process, candidates will be exposed to a range of HCHS-specific data that includes achievement levels and school climate disaggregated by racial and ethnic groups, English learners, and students with disabilities. Candidates are expected to reflect on how the culture of the larger school community impacts their classrooms. Candidates will participate in two cycles of inquiry that include research and professional learning.

HCHS will ensure that site-based supervisors (mentor teachers) hold a valid California Clear Credential in the subject area aligned to candidates’ credentials. As a single-site program, HCHS can align mentors and candidates within the same school context, strengthening collaboration, instructional coherence, and access to department-level supports. Mentors will be experienced classroom practitioners with at least five years of teaching experience (and at least three of those at HCHS), demonstrated teaching effectiveness, and knowledge of curriculum,

assessment practices, and diverse student learner needs. Mentors will participate in structured training and ongoing professional learning to ensure supervision is aligned with Teacher Induction program standards. Mentors will attend a full-day orientation focused on program expectations, inquiry-based coaching strategies, implementation of cycles of inquiry, use of CSTP-aligned rubrics, and support for diverse learners. Throughout the year, mentors will attend workshops and meetings designed to calibrate supervision practices, analyze candidate work, and strengthen coaching strategies. The program director will track attendance and support evaluation of mentor teacher effectiveness through candidate surveys, self-evaluations, and program director review of mentoring practices. Mentors will be formally recognized through stipend compensation and annual acknowledgement of their contributions to candidate development and instructional excellence.

Candidates will have experience in a school setting where the curriculum aligns with California's adopted content standards and frameworks, and the school reflects the diversity of California's students. Candidates will be teachers of record at HCHS, a public charter school that serves a diverse student population. HCHS student demographics include 47% Hispanic or Latino, 12% students with disabilities, 11% African American, and 66% socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Candidates will regularly analyze disaggregated achievement and climate data as part of their professional teaching responsibilities.

#### ***Common Standard 4 – Continuous Improvement***

HCHS has developed a multi-year assessment cycle to support continuous improvement. Data will be gathered across three domains: candidate progress, overall program effectiveness, and professional learning. Candidate progress will be monitored continuously through ILP submissions, inquiry cycle assessments, mentor observations and feedback, and scheduled program checkpoints throughout the year. Program effectiveness will be determined through analysis of mid-year and end-of-year candidate and mentor surveys, completion data, and annual feedback meetings. The effectiveness of professional learning will be evaluated after each session by the program director. Multi-year trend data will be reviewed annually to identify patterns and guide long-term program refinements.

The course of study and clinical practice will be evaluated through rubric-based review of inquiry cycles, mentor observations and feedback, candidate reflections, and completion of ILP competencies. These measures assess both instructional growth and alignment to program standards. An annual induction showcase presentation will provide evidence of candidate professional growth and impact on student learning. Data from all sources will be aggregated and reviewed annually by the program director and program committee, including quantitative and qualitative analyses to identify strengths, gaps, and areas requiring modification.

#### ***Common Standard 5 – Program Impact***

Candidates in HCHS's Teacher Induction program will be prepared to serve as professional school personnel who effectively educate and support all students by demonstrating competency aligned with the CSTPs. Multiple measures of candidate competency include self-assessments, individualized learning plans, and documents to track candidates' participation

and competency in the program. Through completion of the individualized learning plan and two cycles of inquiry on their teaching practices, candidates will document initial and revised self-assessments each year, providing evidence of measurable professional growth. Mentor observations and rubric-based assessments of inquiry artifacts provide additional data. Candidates will participate in an annual Induction Showcase during which they will present evidence of professional growth and instructional impact to peers, mentors, and administrators.

As a program, HCHS will demonstrate positive impact on candidate learning and competence and on teaching and learning in California schools via several data points. First, candidate progress is tracked via longitudinal CSTP-based self-assessments and analyzed through the individual learning plan. Each cycle of inquiry requires candidates to move from initial research to data-driven reflection. Success is defined by candidates' ability to move along the Continuum of Teaching Practice. The program will demonstrate direct effects on student outcomes by requiring candidates to document student growth within the ILP. Candidates must provide evidence of how specific instructional adjustments led to measurable student progress, particularly for English learners and students with disabilities. To measure long-term impact, the program will collect and analyze constituent feedback through candidate and mentor surveys, administrator surveys, exit surveys, and retention tracking. HCHS will monitor and track the five-year retention of induction completers to ensure sustained contribution to the school community. The program director and program committee will review all these data points annually to assess program impact and drive continuous improvement.

### **Staff Recommendation**

The Board of Institutional Review (BIR) team has found the Common Standard responses to be aligned. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission grant Provisional Approval to Helix Charter High School.

Granting Provisional Approval would allow HCHS's proposed Teacher Induction program to be reviewed by the Committee on Accreditation for Initial Program Approval in Stage IV. The Provisional Approval period would begin once the COA grants Initial Program Approval for the proposed program at the conclusion of Stage IV.

Staff recommends that if Provisional Approval is granted to HCHS by the Commission, the period of Provisional Approval be set to three years because HCHS's Teacher Induction program is designed to be two years in length. After three years, HCHS will have had an opportunity to have a cohort complete the program, and the institution will have accumulated three years of data, including completers of the program. A Provisional Site Visit would occur and the report from the Provisional Site Visit will be brought to the Commission for consideration of full approval for HCHS in Stage V.

### **Next Steps**

Staff will take appropriate next steps based on the Commission's action.