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# 1A

## Action

### *Ad Hoc Committee*

#### **Interview, Recommendation, and Appointment of Members for the Committee on Accreditation**

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item provides information about the finalists for an open position on the Committee on Accreditation (COA). After interviewing the finalists from institutions of higher education, the Ad Hoc Committee will select individuals to recommend to the Commission for appointment to the COA and may recommend additional individuals as alternates.

**Recommended Action:** That the Ad Hoc Committee recommend, and the Commission (a) approve the recommendations for one new member of the COA from postsecondary education; and (b) that the Commission approve the recommendation of individuals for the COA Alternate List, if appropriate.

**Presenters:** Sarah Solari Colombini and Miranda Gutierrez, Administrators, 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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## Interview, Recommendation, and Appointment of Members for the Committee on Accreditation

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### Introduction

This agenda item provides information about the finalists for the Committee on Accreditation (COA). Due to an unexpected vacancy on the COA, one postsecondary position needs to be filled. Two finalists are scheduled to be interviewed by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission to fill the vacancy. In addition to the one vacancy, the Commission may wish to appoint individuals to the Alternate List so that, in the event of a future unanticipated vacancy on the COA, the Executive Director can appoint an individual from the Alternate List to the COA. The terms for the new member of the COA and the alternates will begin January 1, 2027, and extend through June 30, 2028.

### Background

Education Code section 44373(a) sets forth that the Commission selects the members of the COA. The COA is composed of 12 members: six must be from postsecondary education and six must be certificated professionals in public schools, school districts, or county offices of education in California. Consistent with the adopted Accreditation Framework, the Commission appoints individuals to the COA for a four-year term. Listed below are the current members of the COA and when each of their terms end.

### Members of the Committee on Accreditation K-12 Professionals

**Connie Cambell**

Coordinator  
Santa Clara County Office of Education  
*Term Ends June 30, 2029*

**Malaika Bryant**

Director, Educator Development  
Kern County Superintendent of Schools  
*Term Ends June 30, 2027*

**Allan Hallis**

Administrator, Preliminary Teacher  
Preparation  
Riverside County Office of Education  
*Term Ends June 30, 2030*

**Patrick McKee**

Director, Induction  
Bonita Unified School District  
*Term Ends June 30, 2027*

**J Sikes**

Director, Intern Programs  
Davis Joint Unified School District  
*Term Ends June 30, 2028*

**Brandy Byers**

Director of Educator Development  
Oakley Union Elementary School District  
*Term Ends June 30, 2030*

## Postsecondary Professionals

**Jessica Bogunovich**

Program Chair/Associate Professor  
University of Massachusetts Global  
*Term Ends June 30, 2029*

**Jenny Chiappe**

Associate Professor  
California State University, Dominguez Hills  
*Term Ends June 30, 2030*

**Michelle Hall**

Assistant Dean  
Chapman University  
*Term Ends June 30, 2029*

**Allison Leggett**

Faculty  
University of California, Los Angeles Extension  
*Term Ends June 30, 2027*

**Michael R. Hillis**

Dean, Graduate School of Education California  
Lutheran University  
*Term Ends June 30, 2027*

**VACANCY****Impact of Anticipated Vacancies on the Composition of the Committee on Accreditation**

Section 2.B(1) of the *Accreditation Framework* addresses the membership of the COA. It specifies that selection of members be based on the breadth of their experience, the diversity of their perspectives, and “their distinguished records of accomplishment in education” (Education Code §44373(a)). All members serve as members-at-large. No member serves on the COA as a representative of any organization, institution/program sponsor, or constituency. However, the membership of the COA is carefully constructed such that a variety of professional perspectives is ensured in considering accreditation-related decisions. The vacancies impact the composition of the COA; therefore, the Commission should take into consideration the following provisions of the *Framework* in its selection process for new COA members.

- a. *“The Committee includes members from the public K-12 school system, and from public and private postsecondary institutions.”*

All six K-12 continuing representatives are from the public school system; three from county offices of education and three from school districts.

Of the five current higher education members, two are from public institutions – two from the University of California and one from the California State University system – and three are from private/independent institutions.

- b. *“The elementary and secondary school members include certificated administrators, teachers, and at least one member involved in a professional educator preparation program.”*

The continuing six K-12 members include one teacher preparation administrator, one program coordinator, and 4 educator preparation program directors.

- c. *“The postsecondary members include administrators and faculty members, both of whom must be involved in professional educator preparation programs.”*

Many of the remaining postsecondary members serve in multiple roles for their institution. The continuing postsecondary membership on the COA includes one program chair, one assistant dean, one dean, and two faculty members. Some of the postsecondary members also have teaching responsibilities. All of the remaining members are involved in professional educator preparation programs and therefore the continuing membership meets these objectives.

- d. *“To the maximum extent possible, Committee membership is balanced according to ethnicity, gender, geographic regions and across credentials awarded by the Commission.*

Of the 11 continuing members, three identify as male, seven as female, and one as nonbinary. The one member whose term has ended is female. Seven of the eleven continuing members are from Southern California, three from Northern California, and one is from the Central Valley.

### **Responsibilities of the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation in Relation to the Accreditation System**

It may be useful to members of the Commission in considering candidates to serve on the COA to review the specific responsibilities of the Commission and COA as outlined in the Education Code.

#### ***Responsibilities of the Commission in Relation to the Accreditation System***

The Commission’s essential responsibilities related to the accreditation system as defined by the California Education Code and outlined in the *Accreditation Framework* are listed below:

- Adopt and Modify the Accreditation Framework
- Establish and Modify Standards for Educator Preparation
- Initial Approval of Institutions/Program Sponsors
- Hear and Resolve Accreditation Appeals
- Establish a Nominating Panel
- Appoint the Committee on Accreditation
- Address Issues and Refer Concerns related to Accreditation
- Review the Annual Report by the COA
- Allocate Resources Annually for Accreditation Operations
- Review and Sponsor Legislation Related to Accreditation

#### ***Responsibilities of the Committee on Accreditation in Relation to the Accreditation System***

The COA is responsible for implementing the Commission’s accreditation system. Its specific responsibilities, as defined by the California Education Code and outlined in the *Accreditation Framework*, are listed below:

- Comparability of Standards
- Initial Approval of Programs
- Continuing Accreditation Decisions
- Accreditation Procedures

- Monitor the Accreditation System
- Communication with and reporting to the Commission
- Evaluate Accreditation Policies and Practices

### **Selection Process for New Members of the COA**

Staff began the multi-step selection process for new COA members in July 2026 in accordance with the provisions of the *Accreditation Framework*. Information and the nomination forms were made available on the Commission website. All nomination materials were due August 28, 2026. Because an insufficient number of applications were received, the deadline was extended to September 4, 2026.

Commission staff made every effort to broadly publicize the COA vacancies. Commission staff included information on the vacancies and application process in the EQ Weekly Update for several weeks and discussed the need with various constituencies. By the September deadline, the Commission received 4 completed applications for the IHE position.

The nominating panel, whose membership is appointed equally by the Chair of the Commission and the COA, is brought together to review the applications and put forward for interview with the Commission two highly qualified nominees for each vacant seat on the committee. The current nominating panel consisted of the following individuals.

#### ***Appointed by the Chair of the Commission***

**Benjamin Odell**, Director, School of Education and SCOE Teacher Intern Program  
Sacramento County Office of Education

**Kathryn Tucciarone**, Director of Certification and Accreditation  
Gevirtz Graduate School of Education  
University of California, Santa Barbara

#### ***Appointed by the Co-Chairs of the Committee on Accreditation***

**Cynthia Grutzik**, Dean, Graduate College of Education  
San Francisco State University

**Cristina Stephany**, South Bay Consortium Teacher Induction Program Coordinator  
Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District

These individuals considered the applications and chose the finalists to be interviewed by the Commission's Ad Hoc Committee for consideration of appointment to the COA by the full Commission.

The criteria for membership on the COA are set forth in the *Accreditation Framework* as follows:

*The criteria for membership on the Committee are: evidence of achievement in the education profession; recognized professional or scholarly contributions in the field of*

*education; recognition of excellence by peers; experience with and sensitivity to issues of human diversity; distinguished service in the field of educator preparation; knowledge of issues related to the preparation and licensing of education professionals; length of professional service; and possession of appropriate educational degrees and professional credentials. (Section 2B.2)*

The Ad Hoc Committee will interview the finalists and review the recommendations at this Commission meeting and recommend to the full Commission the selection of one higher education member in accordance with the following *Accreditation Framework* language (Section 2C.3):

*The Commission selects and appoints the members and alternate members of the Committee by selecting from the nominations submitted by the Panel.*

The Ad Hoc Committee may also recommend to the full Commission the appointment of any finalists to the Alternate List, which may be used to fill vacancies on the COA should any occur.

### **Finalists for the Committee on Accreditation**

There is one vacancy on the COA for appointment in 2026: one postsecondary vacancy. The names of the finalists are listed below. Applications materials are attached in [Appendix A](#).

#### **Finalist**

##### **Virginia Araceli Feliz, Ed.D.**

Associate Professor, Graduate & Professional Studies in Education  
Associate Director, Doctorate in Educational Leadership  
California State University, Sacramento

##### **Lasisi Ajayi, Ph.D.**

Professor & Associate Dean College of Education and Integrative Studies  
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Ad Hoc Committee recommend to the full Commission:

- The appointment of one individual to assume the one vacant postsecondary position on the COA.
- The appointment of any individuals to the COA/Alternate List.

In addition, staff recommend that the Commission review and approve the recommended appointments from the Ad Hoc Committee.