
2B

Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Initial Institutional Approval – Stage II: Eligibility Requirements for Los Altos School District

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents, as part of the Initial Institutional Approval process, Los Altos School District's responses to the Eligibility Requirements for consideration and possible approval by the Commission.

Recommended Action: That the Commission review the responses to the Eligibility Requirements and determine if the institution may move forward in the Initial Institutional Approval process.

Presenter: Poonam Bedi, Consultant, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal

II. Program Quality and Accountability

- b) Effectively and efficiently monitor program implementation and outcomes and hold all approved educator preparation programs to high standards and continuous improvement through the accreditation process.

Initial Institutional Approval – Stage II: Eligibility Requirements for Los Altos School District

Introduction

This agenda item presents for consideration one Local Education Agency (LEA) seeking to become a program sponsor through the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process. The LEA, Los Altos School District (Los Altos SD), seeks IIA in order to offer a teacher induction program. Los Altos SD has submitted responses to the Eligibility Requirements for consideration and possible approval by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission). Los Altos SD is an elementary school district located in Santa Clara County that serves approximately 4,500 K-8th grade students, from the nearby communities of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, and Palo Alto, across seven elementary schools and two junior high schools.

It is an important reminder that approval of the institution for Stage II does not permit the institution to offer an educator preparation program that leads to a credential or license. Approval of Stage II allows an institution to move forward to Stage III in which Common Standards and Preconditions will be submitted for review. In addition, although there is important information about the proposed program contained in the submission for Stage II, review of the Common Standards and applicable program Preconditions and standards will occur in subsequent stages.

Background

California law 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. Among other responsibilities, Education Code section 44372(c) sets forth the Commission's responsibility to rule on the eligibility of an applicant for initial accreditation for the purpose of offering a program of educator preparation.

The Commission requires that an institution seeking to offer new educator preparation program(s) must first be approved for initial accreditation as a new program sponsor and must do so by completing the Commission's IIA process. At the December 2015 Commission meeting, the Commission approved a new IIA process requiring the satisfactory completion of five approval stages as part of the Strengthening and Streamlining Accreditation project. Updates to the IIA process were subsequently approved during the February 2017 Commission meeting. A chart detailing the five stages of the IIA process is provided on the following page.

Los Altos School District

Los Altos SD is seeking IIA in order to offer a teacher induction program. A summary of Los Altos SD's responses to the twelve [Eligibility Requirement Criteria](#) are provided in this agenda item. Los Altos SD's full response is also available on the district's [New Teacher Induction webpage](#). Criteria 1 through 9 have been reviewed by staff and a recommendation has been provided. Criteria 10, 11, and 12 have been summarized for the Commission's review and consideration.

Five Stages of the Initial Institutional Approval Process

Los Altos SD is seeking approval of Stage II in order to be eligible for Stage III as highlighted in the chart below.

IIA Process	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV	Stage V
Action	Prerequisites	Eligibility Requirements	Preconditions & Common Standards	Program Standards	Provisional Site Visit
Purpose	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	Ensures institution meets all relevant preconditions Ensures institution meets all Common Standards	Ensures all proposed programs meet all relevant program standards	Program operates for 2-4 years and hosts a provisional accreditation site visit
Requirements	Institution must: 1. Have legal eligibility 2. Attend Accreditation 101 with institutional team	Submit responses to: • 12 Eligibility Criteria	Submit responses to: • Preconditions • Common Standards	Submit responses to: • Program Standards	Institution must: • Collect data • Host provisional site visit
Reviewed By	Staff	Staff	Preconditions: Staff Common Standards: BIR	BIR	Site Visit Team & COA
Authority	Staff	Commission	Commission	COA	Commission
Decision	Determine Eligibility for Stage II	Eligibility: 1. Grant 2. Deny	Provisional Approval: 1. Grant 2. Deny	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
IIA Status*	Not Approved	Not Approved	Provisional Approval**	Provisional Approval***	Full Approval

*At conclusion of stage

**Institutionally-approved but cannot offer programs

***May begin offering approved program

Criterion 1 through 9

In accordance with the Commission-adopted process for determining eligibility for Initial Institutional Approval, Eligibility Criteria 1-9, as follows, includes a staff review and recommendation.

Criterion 1: Responsibility and Authority

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Los Altos SD is proposing to offer a teacher induction program.
- Greg Drummond will be the Director of the Los Altos Teacher Induction Program and will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program. The Director will report directly to Sandra McGonagle, Assistant Superintendent, who will be responsible for ongoing oversight of the program as the Unit Head. The Assistant Superintendent reports directly to Jeff Baier, the Superintendent of Schools.
- Los Altos SD has submitted a complete organizational chart that indicates the teacher induction program will be housed within the Curriculum and Instruction Department. Greg Drummond, who is currently the Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction, will simultaneously serve as the Director of the Los Altos Teacher Induction Program.
- Los Altos SD assures that the duties related to credential recommendations will be performed only by employees of Los Altos SD and that these individuals will take part in the Commission training related to the recommendation process. Los Altos SD has identified Marlene Revelo, Personnel Specialist, as the individual who will be responsible for credential recommendations.

Criterion 2: Lawful Practices

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- A non-discrimination policy for Los Altos SD's **employees** is provided in the District's Board Policies.
- A non-discrimination policy for Los Altos SD's **candidates** is provided in the draft Teacher Induction Program handbook.

Criterion 3: Commission Assurances and Compliance

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Los Altos SD provided a statement of assurance signed by Assistant Superintendent, Sandra McGonagle, stating that the district:
 - a) Will comply with all preconditions,
 - b) Will submit all data reports and accreditation documents,
 - c) Will cooperate in an evaluation of the program by an external team or monitoring of the program by Commission staff,
 - d) Will participate fully in the Commission's accreditation system and submission timelines, and

- e) In the event the program closes, will offer the program and meet all adopted standards until the candidate completes, withdraws, is dropped, or is admitted to another program.

Criterion 4: Requests for Data

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Los Altos SD's submission noted that the qualified officer responsible for reporting and responding to all requests for data within timeframes specified by the Commission will be Greg Drummond, Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction and Director of the Los Altos Teacher Induction Program.

Criterion 5: Grievance Process

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Los Altos SD has provided a grievance process which will be accessible to all candidates and applicants in the draft Teacher Induction handbook. The grievance process is followed by the grievance form in the draft handbook.
- Candidates will be informed of the grievance process during program orientation.

Criterion 6: Communication and Information

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Teachers with preliminary credentials will be informed of their obligation to participate in and complete a Commission-approved teacher induction program upon hire in the Los Altos SD. The district will also maintain a teacher induction program website which will be accessible to the public without the requirement of log in information, via the district's employment webpage.
- Los Altos SD will include the mission, governance, administration, and admission procedures on the Los Altos Teacher Induction program website and in the draft handbook.

Criterion 7: Student Records Management, Access, and Security

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- Candidates in the program will receive a letter at the end of their first and second year of induction that serves as the official transcript of status and progress in the program.
- All records will be electronically maintained, except for the Candidate Professional Letter of Commitment which will be kept with original signatures in paper format. The Letter of Commitment has candidates acknowledge and sign program requirements including their awareness of the grievance process.
- Candidates will have access to their electronic portfolios through Google Suite as long as they are employed in the Los Altos SD. They can also request access to the documents by contacting the district's Personnel Specialist. Records will be maintained indefinitely.

- Candidates who leave the district can also make copies of their personal documents and can also access their documents in either paper or digital form.
- Induction records will be maintained by the Los Altos SD in alignment with their records retention policy, board policy, and administrative regulation in the same manner as how confidential employee records are maintained. Specifically, this means that the paper and/or digital documents will be maintained in the Student and Staff Services Department and/or district office on a secure server. Paper records will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Personnel Department of the Los Altos SD office and electronic files that will be stored on a secured district server with access limited to the Director of Student and Staff Services, the Los Altos Teacher Induction Program Director, and the Personnel Specialist.

Criterion 8: Disclosure

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- The Los Altos Teacher Induction Program will provide in-person support to all candidates during classroom observations and weekly meetings with their mentor. Candidates may decide to participate in additional professional learning opportunities, in or out of the district, which support their Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- The Los Altos Teacher Induction Program will be housed in the Curriculum and Instruction office at the district office. In-person services will be provided at the district office and at all nine schools. These include:
 1. Almond School
 2. Ardis G. Egan Junior High School
 3. Blach Junior High School
 4. Covington School
 5. Gardner Bullis School
 6. Loyola School
 7. Oak Avenue School
 8. Santa Rita School
 9. Springer School

Criterion 9: Veracity in all Claims and Documentation Submitted

Staff Recommendation: Aligned

- An assurance signed by Sandra McGonagle, Assistant Superintendent, was submitted in response to this Criterion attesting to the veracity of all statements and documentation submitted to the Commission. The letter also attests to Los Altos SD's understanding that a lack of veracity is a cause for denial of Initial Institutional Approval.

Criterion 10, 11, and 12

In accordance with the Commission approved process for determining eligibility for Initial Institutional Approval, [Eligibility Criteria 10-12](#) include a staff summary of the institution's submission, but do not include a staff recommendation.

Criterion 10: Mission and Vision

- The Los Altos School District's proposed Teacher Induction Program mission and vision is to support teachers in developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively teach a diverse student population and contribute meaningfully to the field of education. The district states that this mission and vision demonstrate its commitment to California's adopted state standards and frameworks through the provision of high quality, research-based professional development that is in alignment with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). Los Altos SD states that they seek to develop educators who possess all of the attributes needed to prepare a diverse population of students for high school and beyond. This requires teachers' understanding and development of a wide range of knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to content, frameworks, child development, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Los Altos SD asserts they are committed to this endeavor, particularly among teachers who are new to the profession.
- As noted in Los Altos SD's submission, they attest that the collaborative work between mentor and candidate illustrates this alignment: candidates will design, implement, and reflect on two cycles of inquiry each year, which are individualized plans to demonstrate growth. The mentor, during weekly coaching sessions, will support this work, seeking to bring expertise, guidance, and opportunities for thoughtful reflection to the process. The inquiry cycles require candidates to set goals correlating with the CSTPs and student learning outcomes consistent with the appropriate California adopted state framework relevant for the course of study the candidate teaches.
- Los Altos SD's philosophical belief for developing dynamic, equity-minded, new teachers is rooted in individualized learning and continuous reflection on practice. According to the district, no other partnership will be as essential to Los Altos SD's proposed teacher induction program as the candidate-mentor relationship. The work of a variety of prominent researchers in the education field provide a philosophical foundation for the pairing of high-quality adult learning and ongoing coaching: Linda Darling-Hammond, Zaretta Hammond, Ellen Moir, Elena Aguiar, and others.
- According to Los Altos SD, the mission and vision of the proposed teacher induction program are well-aligned with the district's commitment to provide all students the foundations to learn, lead, and innovate in high school and beyond, as highlighted in the current LCAP goals and actions that follow:
 - Goal 1: Ensure all students have access to equitable conditions for learning.
 - Goal 2: All Los Altos SD students will experience high quality instruction that results in equitable outcomes and expected yearly growth.
 - Goal 3: Provide tiered supports and systems that promote and sustain strong academic growth and positive social/emotional development for all students.

- Goal 4: Ensure a safe, healthy, and respectful school environment to maintain engagement, involvement, and satisfaction of students, staff, and parents.

Criterion 11: History of Prior Experience and Effectiveness in Educator Preparation

- Los Altos SD teachers in need of induction services are currently being served by a consortium - the Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project (SC/SVNTP). Los Altos SD has been a member of the SC/SVNTP Induction Consortium for over 15 years. Los Altos SD states that, as a result of this ongoing partnership and high-quality professional development, their mentors are highly trained, with substantial knowledge of adult learning theory, the ILP, and the many additional processes and tools utilized to support candidates (participating teachers). The Los Altos SD mentors utilize forums to meet regularly (typically monthly) to support professional learning in a variety of areas, including but not limited to induction processes, instructional tools, brain research, equity, and coaching. Mentors in the Los Altos SD, according to the district, will continue to develop and maintain positive working relationships with all teachers, site and district administrators, focusing on district, site, and individual goals. To foster and maintain these relationships, mentors will continue to meet with site administrators at least twice a year. They also utilize triad meetings with administrators and participating teachers to engage in collaborative discussions around ILP goals. This creates a coherent system of support through collaboration, communication and coordination between participating teachers, mentors, and administration.
- The training of candidates in Los Altos SD's proposed teacher induction program will be one-on-one, job-embedded, and aligned to the teacher's ILP goals. Mentors will use multiple measures to support teacher candidates, including but not limited to, classroom observations, videos, webinars, and articles that support the acceleration of teacher practice. In addition, the district will provide support in the goal-setting process, which allows for stakeholders to share processes and instructional strategies for student learning through facilitated grade level meetings and supports additional opportunities for professional growth through facilitation of district professional development opportunities.
- Los Altos SD has posted the third-party invitation for comments on both its New Teacher Induction webpage and its district news webpage on the district website where the public and all stakeholders can access it. No comments have been received at this time.
- As required by this criterion, staff researched the possibility of any additional available information relevant to Los Altos SD's application for IIA and found none.

Criterion 12: Capacity and Resources

- As evidence of capacity and resources, Los Altos SD has provided a copy of its most recent audited budget dated June 2019 as well as a copy of a proposed operations budget for the proposed teacher induction program.
- Los Altos SD has also detailed within its submission the facility resources that will be available for its candidates. These include the nine school sites listed under Criterion 8 above, the district office, and the utilization of Google Suite as the digital learning platform for the proposed teacher induction program.

- Additionally, within the submission document, Los Altos SD has identified the job responsibilities and minimum qualifications for the program personnel and instructional support. Los Altos SD's personnel and instructional support will consist of the following:
 - One part-time Program Director (part-time)
 - One part-time Lead Mentor (part-time)
 - Three - Four Induction Mentors (part-time)
 - One Credentials/Personnel Specialist (full-time)
- Los Altos SD's proposed teacher induction program will be job-embedded so candidates in the program will complete "fieldwork" in their classrooms.
- In the event of a program closure, candidates in the program would be informed about the closure, including the reason for the closure, and the timeline and options available to complete the remaining requirements, according to Los Altos SD's submission. The district states that every effort would be made to provide one year's notice so that second year candidates can finish out the program and new participants would not be enrolled. If this timeline is not feasible, the district would contact, and work closely with, local induction program providers, including, but not limited to, the SC/SVNTP Induction Consortium, local county offices of education, and other local programs to ensure successful completion and recommendation for the Clear Credential. Candidates would be provided with individual guidance and the Induction Director would communicate with those programs to ensure a smooth transition.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission consider the responses to Eligibility Requirements submitted by Los Altos School District and grant eligibility.

Granting eligibility would allow Los Altos SD to move forward to Stage III of the IIA process in which responses to relevant Preconditions and the Common Standards are submitted for review. Approval of Stage II will not authorize Los Altos SD to offer an educator preparation program that leads to a credential or license, such as the proposed teacher induction program.

If the Commission grants Eligibility, it may identify topics that it will be looking for in Stage III. If the Commission denies Eligibility, it may identify what it sees as missing in the current submission in the event the institution decides to continue to work toward institutional approval.

Next Steps

Based on the Commission's action, staff will take appropriate next steps related to the option chosen.