

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

Visalia Unified School District Professional Services Division May 2023

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at **Visalia Unified School District**. The report of the team presents the findings based upon a thorough review of all available and relevant institutional and program documentation as well as all supporting evidence including interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, a recommendation of **Accreditation** is made for the institution.

Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions For All Commission Approved Programs Offered by the Institution

Common Standards	Status
1) Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Met
2) Candidate Recruitment and Support	Met
3) Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Met
4) Continuous Improvement	Met
5) Program Impact	Met

Program Standards

Programs	Total Program Standards	Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Teacher Induction	6	6	0	0
Clear Administrative Services	5	5	0	0

The site visit was completed in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee on Accreditation regarding the activities of the site visit:

- Preparation for the Accreditation Visit
- Preparation of the Institutional Documentation and Evidence
- Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team
- Intensive Evaluation of Program Data
- Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

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

Institution: Visalia Unified School District

Dates of Visit: March 20-22, 2023

Accreditation Team Recommendation: Accreditation

Previous History of Accreditation Status

Accreditation Reports	Accreditation Status
June 2015	Accreditation

Rationale:

The unanimous recommendation of **Accreditation** was based on a thorough review of all institutional and programmatic information and materials available prior to and during the accreditation site visit including interviews with candidates, completers, mentors, coaches, site administrators, district administrators, and other constituency groups. The team obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgments about the professional education unit’s operation. The decision pertaining to the accreditation status of the institution was based upon the following:

Preconditions

All preconditions have been determined to be **met**.

Program Standards

All program standards for the Teacher Induction program were **met**.

All program standards for the Clear Administrative Services were **met**.

Common Standards

All Common Standards were **met**.

Overall Recommendation

Based on the fact that the team found that all program standards were **met** and all Common Standards were **met**, the team unanimously recommends **Accreditation**.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to offer the following credential programs and to recommend candidates for the appropriate and related credentials upon satisfactorily completing all requirements:

Teacher Induction
Clear Administrative Services

In addition, staff recommends that:

- VUSD’s response to the preconditions be accepted.
- VUSD be permitted to propose new educator preparation programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- VUSD continue in its assigned cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Accreditation Team

Team Lead:

Carol Claus
Lancaster School District (retired)

Programs Reviewers:

Enrico Bischo
Long Beach Unified School District

Common Standards:

Jill Barnes
Napa County Office of Education

Rebecca Summers
Los Angeles County Office of Education

Staff to the Visit:

Hart Boyd
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Documents Reviewed

Common Standards Submission
Program Review Submission
Common Standards Addendum
Program Review Addendum
Candidate Advisement Materials
Candidate Participation Pathway
Accreditation Website

Personnel Vitae
Candidate Files
Assessment Materials
Program Handbooks
Survey Results
Precondition Responses
Accreditation Data Dashboard

Interviews Conducted

Constituencies	TOTAL
Candidates	66
Completers	51
Mentors/Coaches	61
Employers	22
Institutional Administration	5
Program Directors	1
Program Coordinators	1
Induction Leadership Team	5
IHE Partners	6
Advisory Board Members	15
Credential Analysts	1
Community Partners	5
Professional Development Team	11
TOTAL	250

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

Established in 1885, Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) is the oldest school district in Tulare County, which is located in the middle of California’s Central Valley. The district covers 214 square miles with a population base of over 135,000. VUSD’s family of schools includes 27 elementary schools (including K-8 and charter schools), five middle schools, seven high schools (including charter schools and other educational options), and an adult school. Over 32,000 PK to adult students are served through VUSD. The district’s student body is comprised of 68% Hispanic or Latinx, 16.6% white, 8.1% other, 3.8% Asian, 2.4% two or more races, and 1.3% African American students. The district’s workforce is comprised of over 3,500 certificated and classified staff.

Education Unit

VUSD’s Human Resources Department provide oversight for both the Teacher Induction program (TIP) and the Clear Administrative Services credential program (CASC). The assistant superintendent provides program oversight while the program director sees to the day-to-day implementation of both programs. The program director is supported by a full-time coordinator and three teachers on special assignment (TOSAs). These six people also form a leadership team for both programs, discussing and leading efforts in data gathering, analysis of program design, and program change. Professional development for TIP candidates is offered through the joint efforts of the program and district personnel while CASC candidates often seek outside opportunities to fulfill their professional development needs and required hours. Most TIP district mentors are also classroom teachers while most CASC coaches are active principals and district office leaders.

Table 1: Enrollment and Completion Data

Program Name	Number of Program Completers (2021-22)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2022-23)
Teacher Induction	54	194
Clear Administrative Services	32	26

The Visit

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 REPORTS

Teacher Induction

Program Design

The VUSD Teacher Induction program (TIP) is housed within the Human Resources Development (HRD) department and is overseen by the HRD Director/Induction Program Director. The director is in charge of the operations of the program including professional development opportunities for mentors and teachers and day-to-day decisions of the both the TIP and the Clear Administrative Services credential program (CASC). The director also supervises one Coordinator of Human Resources as well as three Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs). This group is also known collectively as the educator support team that works to support the teachers and mentors of VUSD's induction programs.

VUSD's Teacher Induction program has maintained positive relationships and partnerships with other programs and various institutions of higher education for many years. During constituent interviews, a variety of institutions participated to give feedback about their positive relationship with the program. There is consistent communication between the program and other program leaders within and outside of the district, with non-district partners including:

- California State University, Fresno
- Fresno Pacific University,
- UMassGlobal
- National University
- Tulare County Office of Education

Additionally, VUSD's Teacher Induction program collaborates and coordinates with the special education department to provide professional development opportunities on special education laws and compliance as well as developing effective Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The induction program also collaborates and coordinates with the Curriculum and Instruction, Student Services, and Social and Emotional Learning departments. It was noted during several interviews how the program director and team place importance on consistent communication and collaboration at all departments and levels for clarity and coherence within the system. During interviews, several individuals noted that they appreciate how responsive the director is whenever they have questions.

Mentors are the foundation of the VUSD Teacher Induction program, and each year mentors sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that establishes and defines their role in the program. The MOUs include the following mentor duties and responsibilities:

- Developing trusting and supportive relationships
- Maintaining confidentiality and discretion
- Meeting with candidates regularly
- Logging hours and professional development hours within inductionsupport.com
- Working with the candidate(s) to develop goals within the context of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- Collaborating with colleagues in the program
- Participating in professional development designed to enhance mentoring and coaching.

Throughout the year, mentors document candidate progress through the ILP and action research on the mentor's individual coaching plan on which there is an emphasis on providing input and helping candidates reflect on best practices and effective pedagogy. During interviews, candidates noted that the structure of the program is appropriate for their growth and development as new teachers.

Mentors are required to hold a clear credential and have three years of teaching experience and are matched with candidates via a collaborative process between the induction program and site administrator. The program and site leadership strive to provide the best support available by considering the following when making mentor matches: subject area, grade level, proximity, personality, and candidate needs and experience. Mentors are required to complete 10 hours of in-person training which begins with a kick-off mentor training. Additionally, mentors attend monthly collaborative-focused meetings specifically designed to support coaching skills and strategies supporting the adult learning theory – mentors attend with their candidates and have dedicated time to build their coaching knowledge and expertise. Several mentors noted that they were previous VUSD induction candidates which helped them understand and relate to their candidates.

An advisory team provides input regarding the induction process and discusses and supports both the TIP and CASC programs, systems, and activities. This team consists of various representatives from all VUSD departments and divisions that collaborate with and support teachers, education specialists, and administrators. Advisory team members also include university partners who agree to work with VUSD in creating a continuum of learning from the preliminary to the clear credential – interviews with the advisory team confirmed this high level of collaboration with a number of members highlighting their positive relationship with the induction program.

The Teacher Induction program regularly collects feedback through Google forms and input at meetings, as well as from various constituencies including administrators, directors, advisory team members, educator support team members, and candidates. The VUSD Teacher Induction program also collects feedback using multiple measures for candidates and mentors through Sinclair Research Group. Additionally, surveys are administered throughout the year to adjust the support provided to mentors and candidates in the induction process as well as

professional development opportunities – this data is also used to adjust the program for the following year for continuous improvement of the program.

The program assesses the quality of services by using multiple data points. Mentors log hours on inductionsupport.com to document time spent with candidates, supporting and working on candidate ILPs, as well as professional development hours. Semester reviews of the ILPs, surveys on professional development opportunities, post-meeting feedback forms, and formative and summative surveys are administered and evaluated to make modifications to the program to meet the needs of the candidates and mentors. Candidates found feedback from mentors supportive of their growth as a new teacher. During interviews, one candidate stated, “My mentor gives me valuable feedback that makes me a better teacher,” while another noted, “They really listen to our questions and needs.”

Document review and interviews confirmed that a summative report is produced each year, and the information from the report is used to improve the induction program. During the 2020-21 school year, modifications were made due to COVID and school closures. Specifically, the VUSD induction website was the hub for information and communication. This comprehensive website allows Teacher Induction candidates to access all assignments and activities needed for the program including resources, professional development, and candidate documentation. The switch to Google has made collaboration more authentic and real time. Adjustments were made to several activities to accommodate for the closures including the implementation of Zoom meetings. Additionally, communication via email, phone, and text became a regular occurrence. Even the culminating interviews for candidates were modified for COVID protocols. RICA/ TPA support was provided to candidates who still needed to meet those requirements. Additionally, candidates were encouraged to focus the action research of their ILP on those additional testing requirements.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

The design VUSD’s Teacher Induction program is built upon a theory that allows candidates to improve instructional effectiveness by planning, doing, reflecting, and implementing change. A review of documentation shows that the application of this theory is embedded throughout the induction process as candidates discuss their challenges, plans, and reflections on data and job-embedded experiences with their mentors – candidates and mentors discuss changes and growth that candidates make along their induction journey.

Document review and interviews confirmed that a candidate's personalized learning experience begins with a baseline self-assessment of the California Standards for Teacher Preparation (CSTPs) and elements on the Continuum of Teaching Practice. From there, candidates evaluate their current classroom context and reflect on areas of strength and areas for growth within the CSTPs. The ILP asks candidates to brainstorm a desired reality for their classroom practice, and this reflection drives goal setting and cycles of inquiry/action research fueled by real on-the-job experiences. During induction, a candidate’s ILP changes to document and reflect on learning experiences and how they are meeting their chosen goals, as measured by baseline and summative data. Throughout the ILP process, candidates are provided professional growth

opportunities for structured exploration of educational resources and materials specific to each CSTP in addition to focused ongoing coaching sessions with their mentor and site administrator. Monthly meetings for each cohort act as a “think tank” opportunity for reflection and realignment based on targeted feedback throughout the ILP process. Candidates also participate in CSTP growth exit interview presentations which are shared with a panel of district administrators and board members at the end of the candidate’s induction journey. During interviews, candidates noted how valuable the professional development opportunities were that related to their ILP goals. According to the 2021-22 induction completer survey, 87.5% of program completers indicated they felt “well prepared” when asked how well the ILP goal-based activities prepared them to develop as professional educators. Additionally, both mentors and candidates appreciated the organization of the ILP and emphasized how it helped in their growth as educators.

Assessment of Candidates

Candidates are assessed in multiple ways for recommendation for a clear credential. The candidates begin by a self-assessment of the CSTPs. Throughout the induction process, mentors observe and coach their candidates in order to gather evidence of the candidate’s teaching practices to document on the Mentor Coaching Plan, which, in turn, supports their work on the candidate’s ILP. The candidate’s ILP is reviewed twice a year by lead mentors that serve as program reviewers to monitor progress, growth, and provide feedback through the ILP. Progress monitoring occurs throughout the two-year induction process through inductionsupport.com, site visits, monthly meetings, emails, phone calls, and surveys. A final CSTP growth exit interview presentation and a pre/post self-assessment is collected and analyzed to show current competence and growth throughout the induction process. During interviews, candidates and completers commented on the timely and helpful support they received from their mentors to ensure growth and completion of the induction program.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, outcomes data including assessment and survey results, the completion of interviews candidates, completers, mentors, coaches, site administrators, district administrators, and other constituency groups, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Teacher Induction program.

Clear Administrative Services

Program Design

The VUSD Clear Administrative Services credential program (CASC) is housed within the Human Resources Development (HRD) department and is overseen by the HRD Director/Induction Program Director. The director is in charge of the operation of the program, professional development opportunities for coaches and candidates, reviews, decisions, and day-to-day decisions and operations of the TIP and CASC program. Interviews with leadership, candidates and coaches confirm that new administrative hires who hold a preliminary credential are referred to the director, who prepares a candidate application and credential plan for them within 120 days. If the administrator enrolls in the program, the program identifies and assigns

one of its coaches to each candidate within 30 days, matching the coach and candidate to defined criteria. Coaches and candidates both confirmed in interviews that they are well-matched pairs. One coach referred to the matching process as “magical” based on intentional relationship-building.

Internally, program leadership coordinates and collaborates with other departments within the district to provide information and training for CASC candidates. This intentional collaboration was confirmed over multiple interviews with various constituencies. Externally, the program has formal agreements with several institutions of higher education to help new hires transition from the preliminary to clear program. Connections to the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE), and institutions of higher education provides the program with updates on educational opportunities for CASC candidates. Evidence of these collaborative partnerships was confirmed via interviews with the advisory team and educational partners. Several representatives from institutions of higher education and county offices spoke to the “deeply collaborative” style of the program director who supports and facilitates induction activities and furthers the work of all induction programs cluster and county-wide.

Cognitive Coaching is the foundational philosophy of coaching design in the program. CASC coaches (i.e., mentors) confirmed in interviews that they annually sign a coach agreement to establish their role as coach. Additionally, coaches confirmed that they document their candidate’s progress through their collaboration with the Individual Induction Plan (IIP) and action research throughout the year on their coaching logs on inductionsupport.com. In an interview, the Assistant Superintendent of Learning and Leading spoke about the design of the program and how it is informed. He posited that as the district moves forward in its work toward establishing a “through-line” of the “Visalia Way,” it would also be working on structuring a uniform philosophy and method for coaching and mentoring.

Coaches are current administrators in VUSD and must hold a Clear Administrative Services credential and have a minimum of five years of successful administrative experience. There are additional qualifications required of CASC coaches that are detailed in the coach’s agreement, and interviews with coaches confirmed they are aware of these qualifications. Coaches must be trained in one or more of the following before being selected:

- Blended Coaching
- Learning-focused Conversations
- Cognitive Coaching

Coaches attend a one-time coach training session led by the program director which includes a number of program tools including a document to assist candidates with self-assessment. However, in interviews, coaches remarked that coach training is sometimes inconsistent. As the program is transitioning in leadership, the consistency of coach training is a focus of continuous improvement with leadership working to develop standardized and systematic training for all coaches. Five to six collaborative coaching meetings occur throughout the year. During

interviews, coaches confirmed that these meetings provide ongoing support in their knowledge of the requirements of the program as well as time to collaborate with each other. Additionally, candidates confirmed that when a candidate feels that their coach is not well-matched, he or she reaches out to the program director for a reassignment.

Advisory team members include university and county partners along with VUSD administrators and teachers. The advisory team meets two to three times each year to discuss and support the VUSD's TIP and CASC program, systems, and activities. During interviews, members of the team confirmed that they serve as key contributors to the design, implementation, maintenance, and effectiveness of the CASC program. One of the members communicated that the program director is an "innovator" and "great learner" who "want(s) to learn from all of us." Additionally, this member stated, "Bouncing ideas off of each other and a lot of ideas to the group. We can pass on the ideas as a district program to our other districts. It has been a great ride with her." When asked to cite specific examples, community partners stated, "[The program director] made a lot of changes to CASC based on our conversations. The description of practice rubric was showing growth and now it is very clearly showing competency. She leads a very collaborative program. She always reaches out when she has a wonder and is always striving to improve the program. She is all about supporting everyone around her. We have had a lot of long and late-night conversations."

Candidate work and progress in goal setting, action research, and demonstration of competency is monitored informally at monthly collaborative induction meetings and formally each year via the Fieldwork Portfolio Review. Competency of candidates are assessed through their California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL) description of practice self-assessment tool, in collaboration and agreement with their coaches. They are also assessed mid-year and end-of-year by submitting their IIP to the program director for review and feedback.

Leadership, coaches, and candidates confirmed that the CASC program contracts with the Sinclair Research Group to administer and analyze formative and summative surveys. The data is used to make modifications to the program to meet the needs of the candidates and coaches. Surveys are administered throughout the year to adjust the support provided to coaches and candidates in the CASC process as well as professional development opportunities. Coaches confirmed that if there is an issue with their work or approach, the program director immediately reaches out to redirect them, if needed. Summative evaluation for coaches occurs both through self-assessment surveys and candidate feedback surveys. Leadership confirmed that these surveys are administered by the Sinclair Research Group and summative reports are provided to the program.

Candidates and coaches confirmed that every professional development or training offering is followed with a link or QR code to an evaluation survey. As one coach stated, "At the end of each year and/or candidate, we have an opportunity to sit down and talk about what went well with your candidate and how would I want to grow - that would be one-on-one. We always give surveys at the end of our time together. Everyone in the program is open to feedback, welcome

it, and want it.” Another coach said, “[The program director] is ‘on it.’ She gives us feedback right away. She looks at everyone’s work often and we are redirected if we need to be. If there is something wrong, we have very open and transparent communication. I think we had a survey at one point. Much of everything we do has a QR code and a survey. The team is very approachable.”

The VUSD CASC program began operations in the 2020-2021 school year. Modifications to the initial program were made due to COVID and school closures. The CASC website was the hub for information and communication and CASC meetings were offered via Zoom. Leadership, candidates, and coaches confirm that the program is moving toward more in-person work and events. Since the new leadership has been put into place, many changes, modifications, and improvements have been put into place. These include the following:

- Professional Learning Modules housed in Schoology.
- The description of practice (DOP) assessment was changed to reflect competency. Candidates will complete a new DOP mid-program and at the end of the program.
- An updated exit interview process and evaluation form to demonstrate competency was designed and implemented.
- A CASC Year 2 final candidate/coach checklist was developed and added.
- An updated coach logging process was added through inductionSupport.com to include more robust details about interactions.
- A coach observation/feedback form was added.
- Meeting frequency changed from monthly meetings to four meetings a year – attendance is required at three meetings.
- Bi-monthly audits were added for candidates and coaches to inform them of their progress in the program.

During coach interviews, many coaches spoke about the modifications in the program as a very positive thing. One stated, “A lot more attention is given to us as coaches, a lot more check-ins. It is more organized this year. The clarity is better, infographics, website, coaching is in the context of the work and the project that [the candidates] are doing. I feel invested and that makes the coaching more authentic.”

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

The IIP has two parts. The first part of the IIP is self-assessment and goal setting. After the initial self-assessment, the candidate chooses 3 CPSELs and an element from that standard to set three SMART goals for the year. The second part of the IIP is the action research project. Candidates choose one of their three SMART goals to create a professional learning plan and implement an action research project. For the other two goals, candidates create a professional learning plan. In this section, the candidates also capture and reflect on three coaching checkpoints or conversations.

The IIP is developed again in year two of the program. Each candidate revisits their self-assessment at the beginning of year 2 and sets goals around the remaining three CPSELs. Candidates begin a new action research project, do a final reflection on their DOP for all six CPSELs, and end the year with a culminating exit presentation and interview where candidates share with district principals, leadership, and board members their growth and competency throughout their two years in the CASC program on each of the six CPSELs.

Candidates develop their leadership skills through authentic experiences within their assigned setting, thereby making their growth in and reflection on the CPSELs meaningful and applicable. Candidates use the IIP as a tool to document and reflect on their learning experiences and competency. Coaches provide support to the candidate by utilizing the leadership activities guide as a resource, and the candidate notes the activities on the IIP. At the end of year one and mid-program, candidates again self-assess on their growth and competency on the CPSELs through their assessment and reflections on the DOP.

During interviews, candidates confirmed that the IIP is the central component of their CASC induction experience. One year-two candidate shared that he was in the online program for the first year, but now with this program, “I meet weekly with my coach and have been able to shape my action plan around things that he and I are both passionate about.” Another candidate stated, “My coach understands my role and that has been very helpful. The professional development opportunities are helpful to understand this process. The district leverages technology to provide us with intentional specific feedback in induction support.”

Professional learning opportunities are embedded in the development of the IIP in both Year one and two. For each of the three goals, the candidate creates a professional learning plan that connects to the goal by drawing from the leadership activities guide and the menu of activities provided to the candidate by the program. The candidate chooses one activity, artifact, or experience from each of the applicable CPSEL lists on the leadership activity guide, notes that activity on their IIP and action research record, and includes evidence of completion of the activity. The menu of professional activities is part of the IIP and offers both required and optional activities designed to promote candidate growth and competency. The action research project, as completed each year for the IIP, is a central component of reflection on current practice, direct instruction in research-based best practices, modeling, problem-based practice, and opportunities for planning and adaptation to current leadership responsibilities. Professional learning also includes three required collaborative coaching meetings in which the candidate and coach attend together. These meetings also allow for networking opportunities for the candidates.

Candidates, completers, and coaches all confirmed the importance of the professional development element of the program. One candidate stated, “I had the opportunity to attend monthly AP meetings that we can use as professional development. We focus on our goals to center professional development around those.” Another candidate confirmed, “Schoology has the CPSEL courses, and then we complete a Google slide. ACSA also provides professional development.” Candidates demonstrated knowledge that 20 hours are required for each

program year. In addition, they shared that there are more professional development offerings on topics such as culture and cultural proficiency. Additionally, there is also an administrative literacy strand for elementary administrators.

Coaches confirmed in interviews that they play a vital role in the development of the IIP. Administrative coaches guide the candidate through the growth and competency process and assist in determining how to best develop and implement the goals set individually by each candidate in the IIP in their current leadership roles. Throughout year two, candidates will again collaborate and utilize their coach for support and guidance through their growth and competency in the three selected CPSELs for the year.

Assessment of Candidates

The program director and a team of experienced administrators review the electronic fieldwork portfolio at the middle and end of each school year and provide feedback to the candidates and their coaches to support the candidate towards competency. The candidate and coach complete a final fieldwork portfolio checklist to collaboratively reflect on whether the candidate has met all of the requirements for recommendation of a clear credential. Administrators also serve as panelists for the candidate's culminating exit interview presentation. During this presentation, candidates present their growth and competency during their time in CASC induction to district and site leadership. In the interview with the leadership team, the director confirmed that these are new processes created in the 2022-23 academic year as checks and balances to ensure that competencies have been met. A review of programmatic documentation confirmed that these pieces are in place for summative assessment of the candidates completing the program this year.

The program director and coach assess the feedback on both the fieldwork portfolio review and the culminating exit interview rubric to determine candidate competence and preparedness. Each candidate is required to meet competency on at least one element in each of the six CPSELs during the two years of CASC induction. At the end of two years, the program will recommend candidates for their clear credential if they have completed all requirements and can write and speak to their competency in the CPSELs.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, outcomes data including assessment and survey results, the completion of interviews with candidates, completers, mentors, coaches, site administrators, district administrators, and other constituency groups, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Clear Administrative Services program.

INSTITUTION SUMMARY

VUSD's TIP and CASC program focus on supporting candidates and their unique needs in an individualized manner. Evidence indicated and interviews confirmed that the programs support new general education teachers, new education specialist teachers, and novice administrators

through systematic coaching and personalized learning within their local context. The foundation of VUSD’s programs is mentor/coach support centered on achievement of individualized candidate goals and growth in professional practice. Candidates of both programs mentioned in interviews how important the pairing of their mentors/coaches is to their success and spoke of their appreciation for the support they provided.

The work of induction is based on the development of the ILP/IIP which guides candidate reflection and development of effective practices. The district has adopted a vision with induction goals in mind. The superintendent mentioned that he has worked with the board of trustees to include the induction goals in the district vision. The theme of “What it means to be an effective teacher and administrator” is woven throughout the district. The superintendent noted that “It’s important to guide our new teachers in completing their requirements and hope that someday they will become administrators in our district.”

Across all constituent interviews, there was appreciation for the individualized attention, responsiveness, and dedication to educational excellence on the part of the program leaders and district leadership. Under their direction, the priority is to provide the resources, support, and training so that all candidates have the opportunity to build a strong foundation upon which they can grow in their professional practice, not only in their induction years but throughout their career in education.

The HRD/Induction Program Coordinator conscientiously works to maintain a consistent induction experience for new candidates, despite recent leadership changes. Mentor and coach training is a work in progress, and the program leadership continually strives for institution-wide coherence and consistency. Community partners stated during interviews that the program leadership is deeply collaborative, reaches out to others for feedback and input, and is constantly improving the induction programs. As a result, the induction programs have flourished under the responsibility of the program director and the coordinator who are always working to clarify systems and ensure that the quality of the programs continues.

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

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant constituencies 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
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

Program documentation confirms that VUSD’s TIP and CASC program prepare educators by implementing an inquiry driven mentoring program wherein candidates develop a personalized goal drawn from the candidate’s professional context and self-identified areas of growth. The programs are supported by district leadership and are seen as integral to the success of VUSD.

Program staff and relevant constituents are actively involved in the organization, coordination, and decision making, as indicated by interviews with mentors, coaches, leadership team members, advisory team members, and organizational leadership. TIP mentors and CASC coaches reported consistently offering feedback and seeing proposed changes implemented immediately. Changes within CASC are ongoing since the program is fairly new to the district and has been revamped since 2021. During the superintendent interview, it was evident that the superintendent is committed to the programs’ guidelines, support, and accomplishments. District leadership mentioned in interviews that they receive regular updates on both programs from program leadership.

VUSD’s programs are mentor-focused programs which seek to support new candidates and create a smooth transition from their university programs to new teacher and administrator assignments. The program is centered around the ILP or IIP and individualized goals that support candidate growth and learning. As one site administrator said, “I believe relationship building is key to making a strong program and it shows how diligent the program is in matching candidates to mentors and coaches.”

The program design for each program puts candidate needs at the center and focuses on the development of candidate practice as it relates to teaching, leading, and learning. Many candidates and completers commented that induction work did not feel like a burden but rather the work is an extension of their daily work that helped them become better teachers or administrators. Recruitment and faculty development support hiring and retention of faculty who represent diversity, as evidenced by documentation and interviews. Most of the mentors and coaches reported they were TIP and/or CASC candidates in the past. Interviews with site administrators indicated that program coordinators, mentors, and coaches effectively support candidates’ abilities to assess and implement research-based strategies. Interviews with candidates confirmed that they receive regular updates on their progress and receive feedback on next steps towards completion. The program systematically ensures that all recommended candidates have met program requirements by having a system of checks and balances to verify completion that tracks each candidate’s progress.

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

Common Standard 2: Candidate Recruitment and Support	Team Finding
Appropriate information and personnel are clearly identified and accessible to guide each candidate’s attainment of program requirements.	Consistently
Evidence regarding progress in meeting competency and performance expectations is consistently used to guide advisement and candidate support efforts. A clearly defined process is in place to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 2: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

A review of program documentation confirmed that VUSD works in partnership with regional institutions to smoothly enroll and transition incoming interns, TIP candidates, and CASC candidates into district support programs. The human resources department coordinates with induction leadership to identify eligible candidates and – through a process of credential analysis – plan next steps to match incoming candidates with a TIP mentor or CASC coach. VUSD also provides formal support to “pre-induction” candidates, including permit and intern credential holders employed within the district. This support is outlined and communicated during initial orientation at the start of enrollment for all candidates. Interviews with the advisory team confirmed the partnership between VUSD and preliminary preparation programs. One team member noted that this type of partnership is not typical to all districts stating, “I can’t say enough good things about working with them.”

VUSD’s approach to collaboration with preliminary preparation programs also supports current efforts to diversify their workforce and better represent the students they serve. As part of their partnership with the California State University, Bakersfield Teacher Residency Program, VUSD looks at district data for students and personnel in various demographics (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, highly qualified, etc.) and isolate these within student outcome data. This process supports informed decision making when distributing staff to sites that better reflect student population and needs.

VUSD is also able to leverage these partnerships to support teacher induction candidates with deferred credential requirements. The induction leadership team coordinates direct support opportunities for candidates to successfully complete their Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). Support sessions are offered through Kings County Office of Education and Tulare County Office of Education, both preliminary feeder programs for VUSD. Additionally, candidates who need to complete the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA) receive in-house support directly from VUSD in a series of workshops. The induction leadership team has been so innovative in their approach to serving a large number of candidates with individual

credential requirements, that these partners see the program as a resource for ideas. One community partner shared, “We can then pass along those ideas to other districts in our consortium,” strengthening regional practices and collaborative relationships.

Constituents consistently reported how responsive the induction leadership team was to all questions and needs, and that communication was clear and organized. This is supporting the process of candidate identification, enrollment, and access to support. Progress monitoring is tracked both formally and informally within the induction leadership team and between district administration. Site administrators confirmed during interviews that induction leadership “is always there to contact. I’ve been able to email and receive a response within an hour or two of the message.”

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
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.	Inconsistently
All programs effectively implement and evaluate fieldwork and clinical practice.	Consistently

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
For each <i>program</i> the <i>unit</i> offers, candidates have significant experience in <i>California public schools</i> with diverse <i>student</i> populations and the opportunity to work with the range of <i>students</i> identified in the <i>program</i> standards.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 3: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

VUSD’s teacher and administrator induction programs are job-embedded, individualized, goal-driven programs that allow candidates to self-select their area for growth through the use of an ILP or IIP and apply the tenants of continuous improvement in order to learn, practice, and demonstrate competencies required to clear their credential. Appropriately matched mentors and coaches, induction orientation and regular meetings, and self-selected professional learning opportunities support teacher and administrator induction candidates. Candidates shared during interviews that the induction meetings are “very helpful and informative. When it came to the CSTPs, they broke them apart for us and provided clear direction toward meeting goals and expectations.” The induction roadmap outlines all requirements on a timeline for candidates and mentors and was reported in interviews as “helpful.” Additional professional development resources are housed on a comprehensive website for TIP and CASC candidates and mentors and coaches, supporting growth in individualized goals.

Mentors and coaches are selected based on clear criteria, including years of experience, similar credentials, similar assignments, and site context. Oftentimes, candidates are matched with an onsite mentor to ease the capacity to connect, collaborate, and work on induction requirements. Mentors and coaches receive initial orientation to the role and are provided with opportunities to attend training sessions during the year. As VUSD works to restructure and align district-wide best practices, the induction staff is working to develop standardized and systematic mentor training for all mentors and coaches, regardless of role within the district. The induction leadership team and district leadership both described the current process to identify a “through line” for developing calibrated coaching practices across the district by identifying a shared core research base and clarity on instructional expectations. As this continues to develop at VUSD, all constituents expressed an enthusiasm for continued collaboration on next steps while engaging in the process of continuous improvement.

VUSD is dedicated to serving students through quality preparation and has worked to view programs with an open and curious mind. Induction leadership has diligently collaborated with regional colleagues and partners to develop the current programs and engages regularly with district leadership to integrate that learning into the larger district vision.

Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement	Team Finding
The education unit develops and implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at both the unit level and within each of its programs that identifies program and unit effectiveness and makes appropriate modifications based on findings.	Consistently
The education unit and its programs regularly assess their effectiveness in relation to the course of study offered, fieldwork and clinical practice, and support services for candidates.	Consistently
Both the unit and its programs regularly and systematically collect, analyze, and use candidate and program completion data as well as data reflecting the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services.	Consistently
The continuous improvement process includes multiple sources of data including 1) the extent to which candidates are prepared to enter professional practice; and 2) feedback from key constituencies 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

VUSD’s induction programs focus on continuous improvement by collaborating with the advisory team, which meets once a semester and includes site and district administrators, higher education partners, and candidates. The program also meets three times a year with the CASC regional group which consists of school districts and university partners who offer CASC programs. Additionally, program leadership collaborates with Cluster 3 programs four times a year and meets monthly as needed for additional feedback, sharing best practices, and support with other community partners. An institution of higher education member stated, “The program director has worked extensively with them to ensure that the transition from university to induction is a smooth one.”

VUSD’s programs’ approach to continuous improvement includes ongoing collection and study of data from all constituents. These multiple measures, including but not limited to, in-person visits with site administrators, constituent participation in the advisory team, mentor and coach meetings, and end-of-year program evaluations are used to assess and provide specific data on the effectiveness of the programs, course of study, job-embedded application, and candidate competence. Identification of program effectiveness includes formal surveys administered to candidates, mentors, and coaches, informal feedback from all constituents, and candidate ILP/IIP growth feedback. Interviews indicated how regular examination and analysis of collected data has informed and supported many improvements to both programs’ components. TIP candidates shared that the feedback they received on the ILP progress was very helpful towards completion.

The leadership team routinely studies the collected data and adjusts the program as needed. Interviews with candidates, mentors, coaches, professional development providers, and leadership team verified that data-driven decisions provided systematic improvements to the program. Candidates cited multiple specific examples of how they felt they were heard and that their feedback was valued and acted upon in a timely manner. One community member stated, “The program director is deeply collaborative and constantly reaches out for feedback to continuously improve the program.”

Common Standard 5: Program Impact	Team Finding
The institution ensures that candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting state adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission adopted competency requirements as specified in the program standards.	Consistently
The unit and its programs evaluate and demonstrate that they are having a positive impact on candidate learning and competence and on teaching and learning in schools that serve California’s students.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 5: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard.

VUSD’s programs ensure that candidates are prepared to apply the knowledge and skills to support all students in meeting the TK-12 state-adopted academic standards through their successful completion of individualized growth activities with the support of a mentor and responsive induction team. Mentors and coaches are carefully selected to provide relevant support within a TIP or CASC candidate’s individual context and utilize program documents and resources to guide their work. Mentors and coaches then apply their knowledge and skills in supporting candidates as they develop and demonstrate effective competencies to support the full range of learners and staff. Both current candidates and program completers cited examples of ways in which program experiences – particularly support from their mentors and coaches – helped them grow in their ability to serve as professional school personnel. During interviews, CASC completers reported that the program truly does prepare them for the role by “training them for tomorrow” and not just the job they have now. TIP candidates reported the induction checklist and roadmap help provide clear guidance on requirements and timelines so they can “go through item by item and know we’re on track.”

Candidates shared the positive impact generated by the induction team expertise and sincere capacity to connect with each candidate and mentor individually. During TIP candidate interviews, several shared that “The team is very personable – they know you by name,” and that they “go out of their way to locate you and offer help.” Another candidate recalled a time

when an induction leadership team member stopped by the classroom just to check-in one day, even though the team member was on site for another reason. The genuine connection felt by program participants to the induction leadership team speaks to their capacity for positive impact on teacher belonging, thereby supporting retention in the profession. This relationship also creates space for mentors and coaches to have deeper conversations to improve practice and create positive outcomes for students.