

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

Professional Services Division

March 12, 2008

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at Project Pipeline. The report of the team presents the findings based upon reading the Institutional Self-Study Reports, review of supporting documentation and interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, an accreditation recommendation is made for the institution.

**Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions
For all Programs offered by the Institution**

Common Standards (1998)

	Standard Met	Standard Met with Concerns	Standard Not Met
Standard 1: Education Leadership		X	
Standard 2: Resources	X		
Standard 3: Faculty		X	
Standard 4: Evaluation			X
Standard 5: Admission	X		
Standard 6: Advice and Assistance	X		
Standard 7: School Collaboration		X	
Standard 8: District Field Supervisors		X	

Program Standards

	Total Program Standards	Program Standards		
		Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Single Subject	19	13	4	2
Educational Specialist Mild/Moderate Level I	17	13	2	2
Educational Specialist Mild/Moderate Level II	12	9	2	1

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 Self-Study Report
- 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: Project Pipeline (Mt. Diablo USD)

Dates of Visit: March 9-12, 2008

Accreditation Team

Recommendation: Accreditation with Substantive Stipulations

Rationale:

The unanimous recommendation of Accreditation with Substantive Stipulations was based on a thorough review of the institutional self-study; additional supporting documents available during the visit; interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, graduates, and local school personnel; along with additional information requested from program leadership during the visit. The team felt that it 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:

Common Standards— The team found three Common Standards to be met: 2: Resources, 5: Admission, and 6: Advice and Assistance. But Project Pipeline has not met Common Standard 4: Evaluation. Four of the Common Standards are met with concerns: 1: Educational Leadership, 3: Faculty, 7: School Collaboration and 8: Field Supervisors.

Program Standards – For the Single Subject credential program, four standards were met with concerns and two standards were not met. In the Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate Level I program two standards are not met and two are met with concerns. The Level II program has one standard not met and two standards met with concerns.

Overall Recommendation –

Due to the fact that there are a number of Common and Program Standards less than fully met, the team is recommending an accreditation decision of Accreditation with Substantive Stipulations

Accreditation Recommendations

The team recommends that, based on the attached Accreditation Team Report, the Committee on Accreditation make the following accreditation decision for Teacher Preparation for Project Pipeline and all of its credential programs: **Accreditation with Substantive Stipulations.**

Following are the recommended stipulations:

1. That the institution is required to provide evidence that all standards less than fully met are appropriately addressed within one year of the date of this action.

2. That the institution provide evidence of the implementation of a comprehensive program evaluation system involving program participants, graduates, and local practitioners. The system must demonstrate the potential for assuring continuous program improvement and must be applied to all credential program areas.
3. That the institution provide evidence that faculty are involved in the organization, governance and coordination of the programs.
4. That the institution provide evidence that qualified personnel are assigned to coordinate and monitor the special education program.
5. That the institution provide evidence that every program has a systematic fieldwork sequence that meets the program standards and that program and district field supervisors are carefully selected, trained, oriented, and assessed.
6. That a revisit take place within one year to review evidence related to the evaluation system, the fieldwork components of the programs, coordination of the special education programs, and the involvement of program faculty in program design, evaluation, and governance.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to recommend candidates for the following Credentials:

Single Subject Credential
 Single Subject
 Single Subject Internship

Education Specialist Credentials
Preliminary Level I and Professional Level II
 Mild/Moderate Disabilities
 Mild/Moderate Disabilities Internship

Staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.
- Project Pipeline (Mt. Diablo USD) be permitted to propose new credential programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- Project Pipeline continues 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 Leader: **Helene Mandell**
CalStateTEACH, California State University

Common Standards Cluster: **Carolyn Csongradi**
Palo Alto Senior High School

Basic Credential Programs Cluster: **Wanda Baral**
Oceanview School District (Retired)

Kay Dee Caywood
National University

Staff to the Accreditation Team **Teri Clark, Administrator**
Nadine Noelting, Administrator

Documents Reviewed

Institutional Self Study	Field Experience
Course Syllabi	Logs
Candidate Files	Schedule of Classes
Intern Handbooks	Advisement Documents
Program Catalog	Faculty Vitae

Interviews Conducted

	Team Leader	Common Standards	Basic Credential Cluster	TOTAL
Program Faculty	2	5	29	36
Institutional Administration	5	2	6	13
Candidates	15	3	4	22
Graduates	1	0	29	30
Employers of Graduates	4	2	2	8
Supervising Practitioners	2	1	6	9
Advisors	0	2	0	2
School Administrators	5	5	3	13
Credential Analysts and Staff	0	0	1	1
Advisory Committee	3	2	0	5
Recruiters	2	0	0	2

TOTAL 141

Note: In some cases, individuals were interviewed by more than one cluster (especially faculty) because of multiple roles. Thus, the number of interviews conducted exceeds the actual number of individuals interviewed.

Background information

Project Pipeline was established in 1993 as a 501c(3) organization, providing intern credentialed teachers to schools in Northern California. The mission statement for the program is “to provide eligible individuals an affordable and convenient way to earn a California teaching credential while meeting California’s demand for new teachers. Working with a consortium of Northern California school districts, Project Pipeline serves as a means for school districts to develop their teacher hiring pool with high-quality teacher candidates. Once hired, these candidates become full-time teacher interns receiving a salary plus benefits as they take courses through Project Pipeline to earn their credentials.”

Education Unit

Project Pipeline is an accredited sponsor of educator preparation programs, headquartered in Sacramento, California with satellite centers in Concord and Alameda. The program has 13.5 full time administrative staff at the three centers: directors, coordinators, recruiter, credential analyst and administrative assistants. The additional program staff are part time and include 54 instructors, 47 supervisors, and 180 mentors. Interns are placed in sixty districts in Northern California.

Each of the three centers has a coordinator of instruction and coordinator of support to facilitate services to the interns and monitor assignments at the school sites. The coordinators are responsible for organizing and monitoring the instruction and support activities for both programs.

All candidates in the Project Pipeline program are interns employed as teachers of record in the public schools. Therefore, courses are offered on Friday afternoon-evenings (sometimes also on Thursday evenings) and all day Saturdays, usually twice a month. The program values practical experience and all instructors have experience in K-12 schools. Single subject interns participate in the program for two years to earn the Preliminary credential and Education Specialist interns complete a three year program that results in a Clear Level II credential.

Table 1
Program Review Status

Program Name	Program Level	Program Completers 2006-07	Number of Candidates 2007-08	Agency Reviewing the Program
Single Subject	Initial	85	226	CTC
Education Specialist: MM Level I and Level II	Initial/ Advanced	24	107	CTC

The visit

The visit began at noon on Sunday, March 9th with a visit to the Sacramento center, the headquarters for the visit. The team composed of four volunteers and CTC staff were given an overview of the program by the Executive Director, and conducted interviews with staff, the Board, course instructors, program supervisors, graduates, and employers. Monday, March 10th, half of the team traveled to the Concord and Alameda centers to interview interns, principals, instructors, and both program and district-based supervisors. Tuesday the work continued at the Sacramento center with a presentation of a mid-visit report to discuss concerns. The team completed the report on Wednesday morning and presented the report at 1 pm to the program.

Common Standards

Standard 1: Education Leadership

Standard Met With Concerns

The institution (faculty, dean/director and institutional administration) articulates and supports a vision for the preparation of professional educators. All professional preparation programs are organized, governed, and coordinated with the active involvement of credential program faculty. Institutional leadership fosters cohesiveness in management; delegates responsibility and authority appropriately; resolves each professional preparation program's administrative needs as promptly as feasible; and represents the interests of each program in the institution, the education profession, and the school community.

Standard Findings

Project Pipeline is organized with an Executive Director, Director of Programs, Director of Operations, Recruiter, Coordinator of Advertising and Marketing, Credential Analyst, and five coordinators who staff three centers located in Sacramento, Concord and Alameda. Course instructors and program supervisors are managed and supported by coordinators.

Reviews of program documents and interviews with faculty, interns, and practitioners reveal the lack of a carefully articulated and widely shared process for the active involvement of credential program faculty in program design, governance, and organization of the program. Interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders suggest that the direction of the program rests mainly with the three directors.

Areas of Strength in Standard Implementation

The program articulates and supports a vision for the preparation of teachers especially for hard to staff school districts with diverse student populations. Interns reported their appreciation for the program's cohort model and their ability to establish relationships and a network of support.

Standard 2: Resources

Standard Met

Sufficient resources are consistently allocated for the effective operation of credential preparation program, to enable it to be effective in coordination, advising, curriculum, instruction, and field experiences. Library and media computer facilities, and support personnel, among others, are adequate.

Standard Findings

Resources are proportionally allocated to the three centers based on enrollment and used to support instruction and field experiences. Sufficient resources are available for all aspects of the program. A revised Project Pipeline website with a navigation button titled "Teacher Resources" provides a rich supply of links to professional educational libraries and a wide variety of resources for beginning teachers. All three Project Pipeline centers have wireless internet access for students, faculty, and staff.

Areas for Growth in Standard Implementation

It might be helpful if the website contained links from research and theory resources to the Pipeline courses. In addition, since the centers and interns are spread across many counties and districts, the utilization of virtual communities such as discussion boards might be valuable.

Standard 3: Faculty

Standard Met with Concerns

Qualified persons are hired and assigned to teach all courses and supervise all field experiences in each credential preparation program. Faculty reflect and are knowledgeable about cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity. The institution provides support for faculty development, and recognizes and rewards outstanding teaching. The institution regularly evaluates the performance of course instructors and field supervisors, and retains in credential programs only those individuals who are consistently effective.

Standard Findings

Project Pipeline is composed of dedicated faculty (in this program defined as part-time instructors and program supervisors). Approximately, two-thirds of supervisors and three-fourths of faculty have advanced degrees. While Project Pipeline offers both Education Specialist Level I and Level II credential programs, the program does not have a director or coordinator with expertise in special education presently assigned to supervise and monitor coursework and field experiences.

Program documents and interviews with constituents show that the evaluation of faculty occurs both informally in the form of visits by the center coordinators to classes and through end-of-course student rating forms. According to the directors and coordinators, instructors are provided feedback, but the team found no documented faculty evaluation process. There is no evidence that Project Pipeline provides support for on-going faculty development.

Standard 4: Evaluation

Standard Not Met

The institution regularly involves program participants, graduates, and local practitioners in a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of courses and field experiences, which leads to substantive improvements in each credential preparation program, as needed. Meaningful opportunities are provided for professional practitioners and diverse community members to become involved in program design, development and evaluation activities.

Standard Findings

Project Pipeline does not regularly involve program participants, graduates, employers, and local practitioners in evaluation of the quality of its credential programs. The team found that data was neither systematically nor comprehensively collected across all programs. Interviews of stakeholders show that informal, conversational efforts have been made by the directors and coordinators to assess and then alter the program. However, there is no systematic process to review data and use the information to guide and coordinate program improvements.

The program has developed an evaluation tool for assessing the quality of support of field supervisors, but has yet to implement the tool. Interns complete a rating form for every course instructor, but the team did not find the data to be aggregated or organized. The program has made recent efforts to collect some survey data, but there is no evidence they have analyzed or utilized the data.

Standard 5: Admission

Standard Met

In each professional preparation program, candidates are admitted on the basis of well defined admission criteria and procedures (including all Commission-adopted admission requirements) that utilize multiple measures. The admission of students from a diverse population is encouraged. The institution determines that candidates meet high academic standards, as evidenced by appropriate measures of academic achievement, and demonstrate strong potential for professional success in schools, as evidenced by appropriate measures of personal characteristics and prior experience.

Standard Findings

Project Pipeline has established clear admissions criteria and procedures that include multiple measures and the Commission-adopted admission requirements. These criteria are published on the Pipeline website and are introduced and explained to prospective applicants at regularly scheduled orientation and recruiting sessions. Current demographic data indicates that Project Pipeline recruits and prepares a diverse population of teacher candidates.

Areas of Strength in Standard Implementation

Several groups of stakeholders commented on the positive role of the recruiter and the recruiting process in finding and placing qualified and motivated interns in their school districts.

Areas for Growth in Standard Implementation

It was mentioned by interns that the capability of submitting the application online would be appreciated.

Standard 6: Advice and Assistance

Standard Met

Qualified members of the institution's staff are assigned and available to advise candidates about their academic, professional and personal development, as the need arises, and to assist in their professional placement. Adequate information is readily available to guide each candidate's attainment of all program and credential requirements. The institution assists candidates who need special assistance, and retains in each program only those candidates who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession.

Standard Findings

Project Pipeline has two coordinators at its Sacramento and Concord centers and one coordinator at the Alameda center. The role of one coordinator in both the Sacramento and Concord centers is to oversee instruction; the other coordinator oversees support services. The Alameda coordinator fills both roles as the center has a smaller enrollment and only offers the single subject program.

Interns in the program are provided access to their Project Pipeline course transcripts which document the hours and courses the interns have completed. In addition the credential analyst maintains up to date information about candidates' progress towards completing credential requirements. The credential analyst has clear answers to credential requirement questions and provides information to the coordinators.

Areas of Strength in Standard Implementation

All constituencies had praise for the Director of Operations and the coordinators at all centers for their responsiveness. They acknowledge that the Credential Analyst is knowledgeable and provides ongoing and up to date information about credential requirements to students and coordinators.

Areas for Growth in Standard Implementation

Graduates mentioned that the option of purchasing continuing education units was previously available and would again be appreciated.

Standard 7: School Collaboration**Standard Met With Concerns**

For each credential preparation program, the institution collaborates with local school personnel in selecting suitable school sites and effective clinical personnel for guiding candidates through a planned sequence of fieldwork/clinical experiences that is based on a well developed rationale.

Standard Finding

Project Pipeline participates with many school districts to place students for internships. The collaboration also includes using local district personnel as adjunct faculty, teaching courses and serving as school site mentors. The school district personnel provide practical information in courses as well as on-site support for credential candidates. Project Pipeline's program supervisors assigned to candidates are knowledgeable of the teaching profession and well equipped to assist interns in both a supportive and evaluative role.

Student interviews indicated that in some districts and schools, interns have to find their own site mentors or are assigned by school personnel without assistance from Project Pipeline. There were many instances when the team did not find evidence that there were effective site based mentors identified to guide candidates through their internship.

Areas of Strength in Standard Implementation

School personnel and program supervisors reported that when an intern was perceived as having difficulties in the classroom, Project Pipeline staff responded to requests for additional help in the form of extra visits and counseling.

Areas for Growth in Standard Implementation

Some of the district memoranda of understanding have expired and need to be updated.

Standard 8: Field Supervisors**Standard Met with Concerns**

Each district-employed field experience supervisor is carefully selected, trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, and certified and experienced in either teaching the subject(s) of the class or performing the services authorized by the credential. District supervisors and supervisory activities are appropriately evaluated, recognized and rewarded by the institution.

Standard Finding

The team found a few districts or school sites had processes in place for carefully selecting and training school site mentors, but this was not consistent across the program. Many interns reported that they did not have a school site mentor assigned to them or their assigned mentor was not providing the requisite support. There is a lack of evidence of consistent, uniform procedures for selecting, orienting to the program, training in supervision, and evaluating district-employed field supervisors. Additionally, there are no processes and procedures for recognizing and rewarding outstanding service.

The program recognizes the difficulty and challenges in meeting this standard and is exploring multiple strategies to address the issues related to the selection, orientation, training, and evaluation of district-employed field supervisors.

Areas of Strength in Standard Implementation

The program has reconfigured a coordinator position at both the Sacramento and Concord centers that is dedicated to intern support in the field.

Single Subject Internship Credential

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report and supporting documentation, and after conducting interviews of interns, graduates, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are fully met with the exception of:

Standard 1: Program Design – Met with Concerns

1(a) and 1(b) A number of graduates as well as current interns expressed frustration with the sequencing of the curriculum. Although preservice coursework (120 required hours prior to becoming teacher of record) is appropriately sequenced, it becomes problematic when this curriculum is significantly delayed as a result of an intern late-hire. In these cases, which account for as many as one third of incoming interns, preservice takes place after the first year of teaching.

1(g) Although there is evidence that the summative evaluation in the form of a Portfolio and presentation are introduced early in the curriculum sequence (Introduction to Project Pipeline, Course 100) and an existing Portfolio Handbook, a preponderance of recent graduates and current interns interviewed indicated that they were not fully aware of the requirements, rubrics and timelines concerned with the Portfolio.

Standard 2: Collaboration in Governing the Program – Not Met

2(a,b,c) Interviews with school site personnel, supervisors and institutional administration reveal minimal evidence of purposeful, substantive dialogue where partners have contributed to the design and monitoring of the existing program. Meaningful and collaborative working relationships and ongoing joint efforts among constituents that produce effective communication and problem solving are not apparent.

Standard 10: Preparation for Learning to Create a Supportive, Healthy Environment for Student Learning – Met with Concerns

10 (a through e) Although a class and syllabus exists to meet the standard, the current curriculum does not reflect the inclusion of this curriculum during 2007-2008. The team was assured that the course will be in the 2008-2009 program schedule.

7-B: Preparation to Teach Reading-Language Arts – Single Subject Reading, Writing and Related language Instruction in English – Not Met

7-B(a,b,f) Although course 308 (The Methodology of Teaching Reading and Writing) is offered in the second year, the course outline and syllabus indicates that instruction fails to provide a comprehensive, systematic program of instruction that is aligned with the state-adopted academic content standards. There is minimal evidence of a rich array of effective strategies and methods for guiding and developing content-based reading and writing for students of varied reading levels and language backgrounds. Additionally, there is little evidence to suggest that cohesive connections have been established among reading methods coursework, other coursework and intern fieldwork which include ongoing opportunities to participate in effective reading instruction.

Environment for Student Learning – Met with Concerns

10(a through e) Although a class and syllabus exists to meet this standard, the current curriculum does not reflect the inclusion of this curriculum during 2007-2008. The team was assured that the course will be in the 2008-2009 program schedule.

Standard 15: Learning to Teach Through Supervised Fieldwork – Met with Concerns

15(g) There is a lack of evidence of collaboration between the program and site-based supervising practitioners (mentors) and program supervisors. Further, there is no evidence that interns observe and/or participate in the instruction of students in settings other than their regular assignment.

Standard 16: Selection of Fieldwork Sites and Qualifications of Field Supervisors – Met with Concerns

16 (b,c,e,f,g) Interviews with interns reveal evidence of inconsistent availability of site mentors. Further, available criteria for such positions are not consistently made available in order to facilitate selection, nor are they consistently adhered to in order to insure that the support personnel are experienced and effective in supervising credential candidates. Clearly-defined roles and responsibilities are not consistently communicated to mentors. Interviews with mentors reveal a lack of evidence that training is provided by either the program or the cooperating school administration on a consistent basis.

Areas of Strength

The Pipeline Project program offers a valuable and positive intern program for many prospective teachers. The team found that program personnel are professional, highly competent and eager to effect change on behalf of applicants and students. Across the board, interns and graduates were enthusiastic about the Pipeline program, including the cohort model, and considered themselves prepared for leadership in the teaching profession.

Coordinators, course instructors, and program supervisors are enthusiastic and feel confident about initiating the kinds of experiences they deem valuable for the interns.

Areas for Growth

Project Pipeline might consider replicating one of their successful district models for working with site based mentors and the increased utilization of technology, both at the centers and for interns in the field, to support the program.

**Education Specialist Credential –
Mild/Moderate Level I including Internship
Mild/Moderate Level II**

Findings on Standards

After review of the program, supporting documentation and completion of interviews with candidates, graduates, and faculty, the team determined that all the program standards for the Mild/Moderate Level I and Level II credential programs are met, except for the following:

Level I

Standard 9: Program Design, Rationale and Coordination – Not Met

The team found little evidence of a cohesive preparation program design based on a cogent rationale. The program design—coursework and supervision of activities—is not under the direction of individual(s) with current special education knowledge and expertise.

Standard 13: Special Education Field Experiences with Diverse Populations – Not Met

Candidates are completing all field experiences in their own classrooms. They are not participating in the broad spectrum of experiences across age, grade and services authorized by the credential.

Standard 14: Qualifications and Responsibilities of Supervisors and Selections of Field Sites – Met with Concerns

Although, there is a process for district employed field experience supervisors to be selected and oriented to their role in some districts and some schools, the process is inconsistent across the program. The process must be monitored systematically for all interns in all districts and schools.

Standard 18: Determination of Candidate Competence – Met with Concerns

There needs to be consistent and periodic feedback for all candidates throughout their program. The standards require that each candidate be assessed by both a field supervisor or site administrator and a program supervisor. The team found that assessment is inconsistent and some supervisors are more thorough than others in providing feedback to the candidate.

Level II

Standard 10: Support Activities and Support Provider Qualifications – Met with Concerns

There is inconsistent evidence of interns having assigned support providers. When support providers are assigned, there is a lack of evidence related to the role of the support provider in Level II.

Standard 11: Nature and Inclusion of Non-University Activities – Not Met

The institution does not have clearly defined criteria and procedures that allow for the inclusion of appropriate non-university (program) activities in the Level II professional credential induction plan for each candidate. There is no evidence of the school districts providing these activities.

Standard 12: Assessment of Candidate Competence – Met with Concerns

Evidence is inconsistent that assessment of candidate competence is being documented. Verification that the candidate has met the Level II performance standards and other expectations

must be done by both field supervisor or site administrator and program supervisors. This assessment must be authentic, fair, clear and in writing.

Areas of Strength in Program Implementation

The special education interns feel supported by their supervisors and instructors. Employers and district personnel reported that Project Pipeline is an important pathway for providing candidates to their school districts.