

Compliance Report for Monitoring Visits 2009-2010 Teachers for the 21st Century ACP

The Texas Education administers Texas Administrative Code rules required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all educator preparation programs in the state. Please see the complete Texas Administrative Code rules at www.tea.state.tx.us for details contained in each rule. According to TAC §228.10(c) An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter...shall be reviewed at least once every five years under procedures approved by the TEA staff; however, a review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the TEA staff. Per TAC §228.1(c) all educator preparation programs are subject to the same standards of accountability, as required under Chapter 229 of this title.

Information: Mrs. Margarita Guerry, Executive Director/Owner

TEA Identification Number: 071701

A technical assistance visit of the alternative certification program was conducted on February 25-26, 2010 by Texas Education Agency Program Specialists, Dr. Phillip Eaglin and Mr. Mixon Henry.

Self Report Submitted: June 25, 2009

Technical Visit Report Submitted: February 5, 2010

COMPONENT I: COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Component I Findings:

Teachers for the 21st Century is in compliance with TAC §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

The current Advisory Committee now consists of eight (8) members from local public/private school districts, higher education, regional service center, and community/business interests. Per TAC Rule 228.20 (a), the technical visit report indicates that three committee members (one from business/community, one from higher education, and one from the regional service center—the head start program) have been added to provide a more balanced advisory committee membership. Two of the eight apparent advisory committee members responded to the survey. Sign-in sheets were available to substantiate that the advisory committee has new representation from higher education, regional service center, and business groups of collaborators. Program advisory committee records also verified the new membership and involvement of the new members.

The technical visit report indicated that committee meetings occurred on May 2, 2007, November 2, 2007, April 30, 2008, September 25, 2009, and December 2, 2009, and February 11, 2010. Agendas and minutes were available to

substantiate that the advisory committee is involved in the discussions. In meeting minutes, there is little evidence of advisory committee involvement in reviewing program performance and improvements.

Evidence exists in the surveys that the advisory committee has been involved in program policy decision, program design, and long-term planning. For example, the surveys indicated that the advisory committee recommended and provided feedback on student networking with one another and making available tools for student group discussion and participation.

Fifty-percent (50%) (one of two responses) of responding advisory committee members in the first survey indicated that they do not participate in overall program evaluation, that they are not familiar with TAC 227 and 228 that govern educator preparation programs, and that they do not participate in periodic review of the teacher preparation curriculum. In the second survey, 66.7% of members responding (2 out of 3) indicated that they are familiar with TAC 227 and 228. The second survey indicated that 100% of the advisory members responding do not participate in designing or revising aspects of the program's curriculum nor do they evaluate data and plan for the implementation of an improvement plan. Curriculum design and structures should be discussed with members for the purpose of determining a better fit with the needs and requirements in the field. Advisory committee members should evaluate and provide feedback for the distribution of ASEP data, qualitative evaluations from candidates, campus administrators, faculty personnel, mentors, field supervisors, program staff, and student retention information. Per TAC Rule, it is recommended that advisory committee members be substantively involved in the evaluation of the program.

Since the membership of the advisory committee may not be familiar with their roles in the analysis of program planning, evaluation, and design, it is recommended that a handbook be developed and yearly preparation be provided for the members as to their roles and responsibilities as cited in TAC rule. It is also recommended that the minutes of advisory committee reflect the participation of members in the analysis of program design, evaluation, performance, improvement, and field-based experiences. Committee members should be provided with state and federal reports related to educator preparation and teacher quality so that overall program evaluation can be conducted. It is also strongly recommended that committee members receive preparation regarding the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Rules 227 and 228 so that parameters of recommendations can be clear and measurable.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 - GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM. In light of the findings detailed above, the Teachers for the 21st Century ACP is in compliance.

COMPONENT II. ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA

Component II Findings:

The Teachers for the 21st Century Program continues to be in compliance with TAC § 227.10 – Admission Criteria. The program has addressed several of the compliance concerns identified during the desk audit.

It does not appear that the program's admission standards exceed any of the state's minimum requirements for GPA and TASP scores. It is recommended that the program screens candidates for those who were within the top of half of their graduating high school class.

A review of the student folders confirmed evidence that the 12 credit college hours of mathematics, science, English and social studies exist in student transcripts which were not sent to TEA during the desk program audit. The student folder review also confirms that documentation of 50 hours of staff development (CPE) were collected and placed in most of the intern's folders.

The technical visit report submitted indicates that the new program policy for 2009-2010 is that the program requires passing scores on the TOEFL for foreign applicants from countries where English is not the native language and who have not had any schooling in the United States. The review of student folders confirmed that the TOEFL is currently being used to determine English proficiency for non-native English speakers. However, the program's web site does not substantiate this requirement. It is recommended that the website reflects that the TOEFL is required as part of admission to determine English language proficiency for foreign applicants.

Incomplete student records are maintained in paper format. It is recommended that the educator preparation program shall document evidence of each candidate's eligibility for admission to the program such as the basic skills in reading, written communication and mathematics as required by TAC Rule.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA. In light of the findings detailed above, the Teachers for the 21st Century ACP is in compliance.

COMPONENT III. CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM

Component III Findings:

The Teachers for the 21st Century ACP is not in compliance with TAC § 228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum. The program has addressed some of the compliance concerns identified during the desk audit by providing answers to questions not sufficiently addressed in the desk audit’s self report. The faculty consists of 1 instructor, 1 field supervisor, and 2 program staff. Two staff members have a Masters degree. The instructor and the field supervisor are Texas certified and have many years of experience in the public school environment.

The program office and classroom is located within the same room and contains an Elmo projection device, internet access, and a document camera.

Documentation in the PPR curriculum matrix (module correlation) regarding the program’s curriculum (nine modules) alignment to the 17 mandated PPR competencies was provided for the desk audit. However, the requested monitoring visit document (Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Course Correlation TAC §228.30) presenting the alignment between the modules and the PPR items was not provided by the program during either the desk audit or the technical assistance visit. Also, no syllabi for the program’s modules were provided during the technical assistance visit. It is recommended that a syllabus be developed for each program module.

The technical visit report indicates that instructional technology has been added to the curriculum using a program module titled the Digital Learning Module. A needs assessment on instructional technology is administered to determine candidates needs and those needs are addressed based on those indicating “beginner” on items aligned to the technology applications TEKS for grades K-8. Contrary to the description of the module provided in the Technical Visit Report, 77.8% of interns indicate that the program did not offer any type of technology training beyond using a computer for word processing, email or the internet, and 66.7% indicated the same on the second survey. The program staff could not provide a copy of the technology module’s activities or assessments during the technical assistance visit, and the program staff indicated that attention was not given to technology in the program’s curriculum since local schools prohibit the use of various technologies in teaching and learning. To adequately prepare candidates for the TExES per TAC Rule, it is recommended that the program develops an instructional technology module that is aligned with state approved technology competencies for teachers and that a related performance assessment of proficiency be developed and utilized. The Star Chart, which can be found on the Texas Education Agency website, would be a useful tool in identifying the technology competency of each candidate and the campus on which they are working. It is recommended that a measure of those competencies is added to the needs assessment.

Per TAC Rule, it is recommended that the program develops and administers assessments for the PPR curriculum prior to the TExES as none of the modules appeared to involve a measurement of candidates mastery. The student folder review by TEA also did not provide evidence that the candidates are assessed for mastery. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of interns indicate that the program does not have any type of performance assessment to measure ability to integrate technology into the classroom, and 66.7% indicated the same on the second survey.

Clarification for how the modules address the 17 mandated PPR curriculum topics was provided in the technical visit report and during the technical assistance visit. 100% of the interns indicated in the survey that they received instruction on how to use formative assessments to diagnose student learning needs; however, 33.3% of interns indicated in the second survey that that PPR topic needs improvement. Eighty-eight point nine percent (88.9%) of interns indicated in the survey that they received instruction on TAKS responsibilities. Program staff confirmed that such preparation is provided in the form of developing skills in disaggregating data and using them to focus instruction on addressing student needs and subgroup gaps. However, the survey item specifically asked interns about whether they received instruction on “Teacher’s Responsibilities for Administering the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Examination”. It is recommended that the program secures presentations from local school district testing coordinators on the administration of TAKS responsibilities.

Program staff expressed concern that 88.9% of candidates indicated that they received instruction on Laws and Standards Regarding Students with Special Education Needs. 33.3% of interns indicated in the second survey that that PPR topic needs improvement. It is recommended that the program reviews the previously emailed list of special education topics that are recommended by TEA for Educator Preparation Programs to address the Special Education Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities in TAC §228.30. It is also recommended that the program’s module(s) related to this topic be aligned to these topics.

One intern indicated the following regarding the curriculum and preparation coursework on the PPR competencies. “I know that when we were covering these areas in class several students and I were very confused and needed more time.” Staff indicated that candidates were not formally assessed for understanding in any of the program modules, but that they understood that they could repeat modules at no expenses if they felt they needed it. This increase of time spent in preparation will bring the program into compliance with the 300 clock hours required, and the assessments of PPR items will assist in providing candidate with additional support. Per TAC Rule, it is recommended that the program increases the amount of time (clock hours) spent preparing candidates

on the program's curriculum and that the program implements teaching performance assessments for PPR curriculum topics prior to the TExES.

An intern/clinical teacher expressed in written comments provided in the survey that more classroom experience (in lesson preparation and presentation) would be helpful prior to the internship experience. It is recommended that opportunities for micro practice of preparing and teaching subject content be embedded into program courses for critique and observations by other teacher candidates and faculty. Explore the possibility of videotaping the micro practice lessons in program courses so that candidates may critique themselves and reflect on changes in their teaching performance over time. Such opportunities would also address the request made in the survey by the intern for more classroom (teaching) exposure.

During the site visit, program staff also indicated that since Response to Intervention (RtI) is not being implemented in local school districts, the program was not preparing candidates to understand and implement RtI. It is recommended that candidates are prepared in a process for aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessments to TEKS as part of the lesson planning process, and that the lesson planning template and process be enhanced by addressing the state-wide initiative to implement Response to Intervention (RtI).

It is recommended that the Reading in the Content Area Module be enhanced by including strategies for teaching scientific reading and scientific vocabulary development. When examples from the science content area were requested during the visit, it was not evident that it was being addressed in the module. It also appears that the program is not adequately preparing its prospective science teachers using instructional models based on recent research for how students learn science. Per the subject-specific knowledge and skills of the SBEC approved educator standards (particularly for the secondary science subjects), it is recommended that the program adequately prepares science teachers by including recent learning theories such as those described in the National Research Council's *How Students Learn: Science in the Classroom*. It is also recommended that the program conducts an extensive curriculum review to improve the alignment between all of the modules and the subject-specific educator standards.

Preparation for the TExES exam is offered through a program module which offers 6 hours of test preparation. This course is required of all students.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM. In light of the findings detailed above, the Teachers for the 21st Century ACP is not in compliance.

COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING

Component IV Findings:

The Teachers for the 21st Century is not in compliance with TAC §228.35 Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training.

The program reports 130 clock hours for field-based experiences before a program teacher candidate starts his/her one-school year approved internship, or three months of clinical teaching. Per TAC Rule 228.35 (a) (3), only 30 clock hours of the field-based experiences may be counted as part of the minimum 300 clock hours required for coursework and/or training. That number plus 100 hours of field-based experience hours was verified in the student folder review during the desk audit and the technical assistance visit. The program has developed plans to increase the instructional time of the Reading in the Content Area module from 14 clock hours to 28 clock hours to comply with the minimum of 300 clock hours required. Per TAC Rule 228.35 (a) (5), the student folder review also confirms that documentation of 50 hours of district staff development (CPE) is being collected and placed in some of the intern's folders. The program provides 174 hours for preparation, 30 hours for field-based experiences, 6 hours for test prep, and 50 hours given by school districts for CPE, bringing the total number of program clock hours to 260. It appears that the program is short 40 clock hours in meeting the minimum requirements, which makes the program out of compliance for this component.

During the technical assistance visit, there was no evidence provided of follow-up activities or assignments being required of candidates as a result of their field-based experience observations. However, 75% of candidates responding to the survey indicate that there are class discussions and general observation questions following field-based experiences. One candidate responded in the second survey sent that no activities or assignments are required following the field-based experience. The 30-hour requirement should encompass a variety of experiences that help candidates to become "classroom-ready." The opportunity for self-reflection and discussion about field-based experiences should allow candidates to maximize this learning opportunity by sharing each others' experiences with assistance/guidance from a skilled teacher facilitator. In addition, written reflections help the candidates internalize their field experiences and should be included as a program requirement. Candidates should document the date, hours, location, activity and the signature of the campus administrator or teacher. Substitute teaching is an acceptable way of experiencing the classroom/school, but it is recommended that the field experience is supported with a variety of other field experiences that engage a certified teacher. Per TAC Rule, it is recommended that the program shall develop and require that candidates keep a regular record and written reflection

on observations, which may be supported with audio reflections, regarding what ideas are learned from their observations of the field-based experiences.

Compliance status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING. In light of the findings detailed above, the Teachers for the 21st Century ACP is not in compliance.

**COMPONENT V. PROGRAM EVALUATION - Texas
Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF
CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.**

Component V Findings:

The Teachers for the 21st Century ACP is in compliance with TAC §228.40 Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

The self report indicated that candidate’s progress is monitored as they progress through the program by the percentage of students passing both TExES and the number of interns hired by all nine districts. However, no benchmark assessments or monitoring of progress was available to measure student’s professional growth within and across modules at regular intervals. It is recommended that teaching development benchmarks and teaching performance benchmarks and assessments and rubrics using proficiency levels of development based on defined criteria be implemented. The benchmarks for the modules leading up to the Internship need to be developed to confirm skills being acquired by candidates as they grow as teachers. It is recommended that benchmark assessments of candidates’ skills be created for the modules prior to the Internship phase of the program. This would provide the program with an ongoing developmental portrait of the teaching candidates. Per TAC Rule, the entity delivering educator preparation shall establish benchmarks and structured assessments of the candidate’s progress throughout the educator preparation program. The educator preparation program shall also develop and implement assessments for PPR curriculum prior to the TExES as required by TAC Rule.

ASEP scores have remained relatively the same for the past three years with passing rates between 70% for initial rates and 100% for final rates.

To conduct overall program evaluation, the program’s self report and review of documents during the technical assistance visit indicates that the program uses a comparative rubric to analyze and compare data from TxBESS evaluation instrument, PDAS, program intern’s student performance on TAKS, and school administrators’ evaluation.

The following compliance issue from the desk audit was not addressed in the technical visit report submitted by the program. “There appears to be no policies or procedures in place for candidates’ grievances.” The document review also

did not provide evidence that such a grievance process is in place. It is recommended that the program develops and implements policies or procedures for addressing candidate grievances.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT. In light of the findings detailed above, Teachers for the 21st Century ACP is in compliance.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency Visit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any component, please consult the TAC rules and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. An Action Plan will be required on Compliance Recommendations.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: An Action Plan will be required on Compliance Recommendations. No later than 45 calendar days after receiving the recommendations, the entity shall submit to the Director an action plan for addressing the recommendations. A web link to the electronic action plan questions will be emailed to the program.

Per TAC Rule 228.40 (a), to ensure that a candidate for educator certification is prepared to receive the standard certificate, the entity delivering educator preparation shall establish benchmarks and structured assessments of the candidate's progress throughout the educator preparation program. This must be correct immediately.

Per TAC Rule 228.30(b), the program shall develop an instructional technology module that adequately prepares candidates in the subject matter that shall be included in the curriculum. This must be corrected immediately.

Per TAC Rule 228.35 (a) (3), the educator preparation program shall provide each candidate with a minimum of 300 clock-hours of coursework and/or training. This must be corrected immediately.

Per TAC Rule 228.30 (b), the educator preparation program shall develop and implement assessments for PPR curriculum prior to the TExES. This must be corrected immediately.

Per TAC Rule 227.10 (b), the educator preparation program shall require that all students have recorded test scores for basic skills in reading, written communication and mathematics. This must be corrected immediately.

Per TAC Rule 228.35 (d), the educator preparation program shall provide evidence of field-based experiences with observation, modeling, and effective practices. This must be corrected immediately.

Per TAC Rule 228.20 (b), the advisory committee shall participate in all areas— design, delivery, policy decisions, and program evaluation. This must be corrected immediately.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

General Program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement. No progress report is required.

- Develop a handbook which outlines the full roles and responsibilities of the committee members;
- Conduct yearly training for advisory committee members;
- Provide candidates with more opportunities to practice teaching through developing and implementing micro lessons with peers;
- Explore means of videotaping candidates presenting micro lessons in program courses for feedback from faculty and other teaching candidates;
- Improve the involvement of the advisory committee in the overall evaluation of the program and in the review of the curriculum;
- Provide presentations from local school district testing coordinators on the administration of TAKS responsibilities;
- Increase communication with advisory committee members regarding how their feedback impacts and benefits the program design, evaluation, performance, improvement, and field-based experiences;
- Improve the development benchmark process within and across courses by developing benchmark statements aligned to the PPR skills that will be measured at regular intervals throughout the program;
- Enhance the lesson planning process to address the statewide initiative Response to Intervention (RtI);
- Develop aligned assessments of candidates teaching performance and analytic rubrics that provide feedback on strengths and indicate areas for continuous growth;
- Develop and implement policies or procedures for addressing candidates' grievances;
- Screen for candidates who were in the top half of their high school graduating class;
- Develop and require that candidates keep a regular record and written reflections on field-based observations, which may be supported with audio reflections, regarding what ideas are learned from their observations;
- Prepare candidates in understanding how to improve the alignment of classroom curriculum (content and processes), instruction and assessment to district and state standards and assessments;

- Develop module syllabi that make instruction of the 17 curriculum topics transparent to the candidates;
- Include subject-specific preparation for teaching reading in the content areas, including a focus on scientific reading and scientific vocabulary, include theories of how students learn science in the curriculum, and review the alignment between the modules and the subject-specific educator standards as the basis of the curriculum;
- Prepare advisory committee members in understanding Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Rules 227 and 228 so that parameters of recommendations can be clear and measurable; and
- Join the TEA Division of Curriculum and Response to Intervention (RtI) email listservs to receive suggested information for addressing special education and academic content-specific recommendations.