



Compliance Audit Report 2010-2011 A+ Texas Teachers – Houston/San Antonio

According to Texas Administrative Code (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." The Texas Education Agency administers Texas Administrative Code 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.

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Date Self-Report Submitted: January 26, 2011

Program Specialists, Sandra Jo Nix and Vanessa Alba, conducted a Texas Education Agency (TEA) compliance audit on February 22-24, 2011, in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c). The Generalist EC-6 certification program was the focus of the review.

Data Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A review of documents, syllabi, online courses, and curriculum correlations charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition, electronic questionnaires were sent to A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio participants by TEA staff. A total of two hundred three (203) out of nine hundred sixty-six (966) responses to the questionnaires were received. The responses included eight (8) out of sixteen (16) advisory committee members, eighty-five (85) out of three hundred twenty-three (323) educator candidates, fifty-nine (59) out of two hundred seventy-four (274) mentors, eleven (11) out of thirty-two (32) field supervisors, and forty (40) out of three hundred twenty-one (321) principals. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence.

Emily Reaser indicated that A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio is one educator preparation program with customer service offices located in Ft. Worth, Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio with the main office in Houston.

Opening and Closing Session:

The opening session was held on February 23, 2011 at the A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio's office in San Antonio, Texas. The A+ Texas Teachers staff indicated that this was a customer service site and was staffed with three (3) A+ Texas Teachers advisors who answered phone questions and met with potential candidates to explain the program. These activities were observed during the time on-site. Attending the opening session were Emily Reaser, Stephaney Kennedy, John-Peter Lund, Donna Tait (advisory committee member) and Paul

Edelkamp. Paul Edelkamp and Stephaney Kennedy presented an overview of the A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio alternative certification program. Sandra Nix presented the summary overview of stakeholder questionnaires. The closing session was held on February 24, 2011. Attending via conference call were Emily Reaser, J.P. Lund, and Paul Edelkamp. Attending the closing session at the monitoring site was Stephaney Kennedy.

The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

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

Findings:

Support was indicated by the governing body of A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio per TAC §228.20(c) as evidenced by Emily Reaser, the Executive Director, and Stephaney Kennedy, the Assistant Executive Director's participation in various aspects of the compliance audit. In addition, one member serving on the advisory committee was present during the opening session.

The A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio alternative teacher certification program is a collaborative effort among stakeholders per TAC §228.20(b). The advisory committee consisted of fourteen (14) members: eight (8) members from school districts, one (1) member from higher education, one member from the education service center, and four (4) members from business and community interests. In addition, two staff members from A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio alternative teacher certification program meet with the advisory committee. It was noted during the document review that the majority of the advisory committee members were also employees of A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio in various capacities as instructors and curriculum writers. Therefore, to increase the depth and objectivity of input to the program, it is recommended that the program add additional members who are human resource directors, superintendents, principals, mentor teachers, and current and/or former educator candidates of their program. In addition, since A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio's alternative teacher certification program serves the entire state of Texas, it is further recommended that the new advisory committee members represent various areas where the candidates are located throughout the state in order to secure the perspective and needs from that region of Texas. In order to implement this suggestion, it is recommended that the program continue to use conference calls, webinars, and other appropriate technology to conduct the advisory committee meetings. Agendas for the 2009-2010 academic year were presented that reflected two meetings were held for that academic year. For the current academic year of 2010-2011, the advisory committee met on November 10, 2010, and is scheduled to meet again in April, 2011. An agenda was available for the November meeting and participating attendees were listed. Advisory committee membership composition and meetings meet the requirements of TAC §228.20(b).

An electronic questionnaire was sent by the Texas Education Agency to sixteen (16) advisory committee members prior to the compliance audit. Eight (8) advisory committee members

responded to the questionnaire. Four (4) of the five (5), sixty percent (80%) indicated that they had served on the advisory committee for one to three years, while forty percent (20%) indicated they had served on the committee for six to twelve (6-12) months or less. The members also indicated that they participated in curriculum design (100%), policy decisions (100%), and program evaluation (100%) per TAC §228.20(b). The advisory committee members (80%) indicated that evaluation of the program took place more than once every twelve months. As required by TAC §228.20(d), one hundred percent (100%) of the committee members responding to the advisory committee questionnaire indicated that field-based experiences were reviewed by the group.

In addition, the advisory committee members (100%) in their questionnaire verified that two meetings were scheduled each year. In the self-report, the program staff indicated that it required attendance records and provided agendas but did not take or archive minutes. The advisory committee members indicated that they were not asked to sign attendance records (100%), or received minutes of previous meetings (100%). However, one hundred percent (100%) indicated that they did receive an agenda. At the on-site visit, agendas were available in the document review as evidence of compliance. In discussions with the A+ Texas Teachers staff, it was discovered that advisory committee meetings are held via conference call and the calls are recorded in lieu of written minutes. The audio recordings are archived for future use.

Since advisory committee membership may be expanded to other areas of Texas, to orient new advisory committee members quickly and uniformly, it is suggested that an advisory committee handbook is developed that includes duties and responsibilities, meeting information, and other useful information necessary to being an effective advisory committee member. In addition, yearly scheduled advisory committee training should be provided in order to update the committee on changes to law or Texas Administrative Code.

Based on the evidence presented, A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administration Code §228.20-GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS.

COMPONENT II: ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA

Findings:

Admission requirements for the alternative teacher certification program were detailed in A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio’s self-report, on its website, and in published material distributed to potential educator candidates.

In order to be admitted into the A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio educator preparation program, the candidate must have a four (4) year degree from an accredited institution of higher education and have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (or 2.5 in the last 60 hours) or better on a 4.0 scale. The self-report also stated that the Pre-Admission Content Testing (PACT) was required for all applicants with a grade point average between 2.0 and 2.5. The potential candidate must have completed twelve (12) credit hours in a subject specific content area [TAC §227.10(a)]. English oral and written proficiency for out of country applicants were

evaluated by the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) as evidence of compliance with TAC §227.10(e). A review of candidate records verified that the grade point and basic skills requirements were met as evidence of compliance with TAC §227.10(4). Transcripts for out-of-country applicants were evaluated by Span Tran and Global Services. Official transcripts were located in candidates' electronic records. A signed application and a twenty minute interview with a program advisor were also required for admission. There was no evidence of specific interview questions or of a rubric for scoring candidates. It was recommended that a set of interview questions are developed along with a rubric for scoring candidate responses in relation to articulation, grammar usage, general communication skills, and other criteria the program deems essential. The interview questions and scoring rubrics should become part of the individual candidate's electronic records as evidence of compliance with TAC §227.10(6).

The self-report and review of the candidate folders indicated that more than twenty (20) candidates were admitted that required verification of the ability to speak and understand the English language [TAC §227.10(e)]. Two student records were located and evaluated in reference to out-of-country status. A transcript evaluation and TOEFL results were present in the records as evidence of compliance. A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio staff indicated in the self-report that they admit fewer than 5% of new candidates under the 10% cohort rule. One candidate record was located that reflected the 10% admission rule and that candidate was required to pass the PACT prior to admission. The program staff indicated in the self-report that they have more than eleven (11) candidates in the Career and Technology certification field [TAC §227.10(7)(d) and TAC §227.10(3)(b)]. However, no student records were located for this certification area. A total of seventeen candidate records were reviewed and were found to be consistent in content. Each record contained an electronic application, grade point average, basic skills verification, official transcript, and oral communications evaluation. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and transcript evaluation by foreign credentialing services groups were noted where necessary.

Based on the evidence presented, A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227.10-ADMISSION CRITERIA.

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

Findings:

A meeting was held on February 22, 2011, from 1-4 pm with two of the face-to-face trainers (Ann Kucera and Laura Henry) to learn about the face-to-face portion of the training. They explained the content of Modules 1-30 and the process for delivering instruction to the candidates.

Sixteen (16) instructors are utilized by A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio to present the face-to-face portion of the training throughout the state. Qualifications outlined in the self-report for an instructor included advanced degrees, a Texas or out-of state teaching certificate in the corresponding content and grade levels, and at least five (5) years of teaching experience. The

document review included resumes for each instructor. Upon review of the instructors' resumes, all except four met the program's stated required qualifications. The four instructors in question had bachelor degrees instead of master degrees. The program staff indicated that all sixteen (16) instructors were cross-trained and were qualified to present any of the fourteen (14) face-to-face presentation modules.

The self-report indicated that the syllabi contained the common elements of instructor contact information, course and module description, objectives, educator standards and competencies, TEKS, seventeen (17) mandated TAC §228.30 topics, focused reading assignments, instructional strategies, and classroom policies. As evidence of compliance with TAC §228.30(a), a review of course syllabi was conducted. It was found that most of the items listed in the self-report were present in the syllabi which are used for all instructors. In review, it was found that some components expected in the syllabi such as instructor contact information, reading assignments, instructional strategies, or classroom policies identified as included in the self-report were not present. Emily Reaser indicated that the instructors were required to supply instructor contact information at the actual face-to-face session and the contact information was listed in the on-line modules. The instructor's name was listed on the on-line modules, but no phone number or email address information was listed. In the online course syllabi presented for review, each contained the strand, module number, course title, the format which is online, which of TAC §228.30 topics were being covered, overview, objectives, course assessment, Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (EC-12) alignment, and course outline.

The face-to-face instruction covers the following content: Module M-1: Effective Teaching Practices; Module M-2: Entering the Teaching Profession; Module M-3: Child Development; Module M-4: Lesson Design; Module M-5: Lesson Development; Module M-6: Reading Strategies; Module M-7: Special Populations (Overview of Special Populations); Module M-8: TEKS Organization and Skills, Content TAKS, Curriculum Development and Lesson Planning; Module M-9-10: Assessment I & II; Module M-11-14: Classroom Management I, II, III, IV. Each syllabus was reviewed for content.

The on-line instruction covers the following content: Module M-15: Cooperative Learning; Module M-16: Texas Code of Ethics and Teacher Standards; Module M-17: Understanding and Deconstructing the TEKS; Module M-18: Engaging Lessons II; Module M-19: Classroom Management V; Module M-20: Differentiated Instruction (II); Module M-21: Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning; Module M-22: Assessment III; Module M-23: Effective use of Technology in the Classroom; Module M-24: Engaging Parents; Module M-25: Understanding the English Language Learner; Module M-26: Special Populations (Poverty and At-Risk Students); Module M-27: Special Education Overview; Module M-28: Engaging Students; Module M-29: Generalist EC-6 (Part 1); and Module M-30: Reading Strategies II. A+ Texas Teacher-Houston/San Antonio provided access to the online modules to the TEA staff for review.

The Generalist EC-6 content is covered in several modules presented in both face-to-face and online format. The modules included in the preparation coursework were assessments, classroom management, differentiated instruction, lesson development, child development, effective teacher characteristics, classroom management, professional communication,

questioning strategies, technology, and Code of Ethics. The modules and domains were reflected in the Generalist EC-6 curriculum alignment charts. In reviewing the curriculum alignment charts, it was noted that three standards were not addressed: one in health, one in music, and one in art. It is recommended that these three standards be added to the Generalist EC-6 instruction. The Generalist EC-6 curriculum is required to cover the areas of English language arts/reading, math, social studies, science, health, physical education, art, and music. Each existing curriculum area was enriched with supplemental readings, lesson plan development, and intern projects. Quizzes and tests were required with eighty percent (80%) mastery. An outline and transcript of the modules were available for review by the candidates at any time. Grades could also be reviewed by the candidates at any time.

In the online modules, the instructor narrated voice over of a PowerPoint presentation containing information through lists and visuals. The candidates were not able to progress to the next module until the total module was completed and the quizzes and the final examination were completed at the 80% mastery. The candidate was able to review the quiz content and answers and retake the quiz or exam as many times as necessary to reach the 80% mastery.

TEKS information and application were presented in both the face-to-face modules as well as the online modules. The TEKS were further strengthened in the lesson planning and design activities included in many of the modules. The 17 topics required by TAC §228.30 were identified in each module and all were covered adequately. However, after discussion with the A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio's staff it was decided to identify them as the 17 topics as well as by individual topic name. A PPR alignment chart of the 17 topics verified coverage of all topics.

Eighty-four percent (84%) of the interns responding to their questionnaire indicated that they had received a clear and concise course syllabus. Comprehensive coverage of the seventeen (17) curriculum topics [TAC §228.30(b)], Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR), Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), Standards, Domains, and Competencies were verified through the self-report, interns and mentors responses to their questionnaires, syllabi review, and actual preview of online modules, as well as through the course alignment charts and curriculum matrices required by TEA [TAC §228.30(a)].

In analyzing the questionnaire responses from the interns and mentors about how effective they felt that instruction was in covering the seventeen (17) mandated topics, the respondents indicated that instruction in the following areas was extremely effective: code of ethics, child and adolescent development, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) organization, structure, and skills, theories of how people learn, how to develop a lesson, and classroom management to name a few. Areas where candidates would like to see more emphasis placed were: reading strategies in the content areas, teachers' responsibilities for TAKS examination, standards and teaching strategies for gifted and talented students, and standards and strategies for limited English proficiency students. It was suggested that A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio review and utilize, if appropriate, the three TAKS training modules developed by the Texas Education Agency which can be accessed at www.TexasAssessment.com/Taonlinetraining.

The mentors indicated in their questionnaire that they would like to see more instruction/training in reading strategies across the content areas, teacher's responsibilities for the TAKS examination, using formative assessments to diagnose student learning needs, classroom management, standards and teaching strategies for students designated as gifted and talented (GT) and limited English proficient (LEP), and conducting parent conferences. The principals indicated in their questionnaire that they would like to see classroom management instruction within the program.

Based on the evidence presented, A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.30-EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM.

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

Findings:

Most courses in the program are hybrid, requiring online learning and face-to-face meetings. Fourteen modules were presented in a face-to-face format. The sessions were repeated multiple times in the five key cities of Dallas, Ft. Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston. Participants were able to attend class at any site. The large group sessions meet from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Participation is recorded via identity scan at the time of admission and departure from the training sessions. For the 15 modules completed online, the candidate or intern was authenticated through a secure web portal and completion of the course was tracked automatically via a university grade learning management system. Timestamps of component completion were stored in a database and compared to the date of assignment to ensure compliance. In reviewing the online-modules, it was noted there was no orientation on how to navigate through the online portion of the program. It is recommended that a short online orientation module is developed for the entry portion of the program. Also presented online were six (6) internship projects. The internship projects involved the following: campus interviews with key staff members such as educational diagnosticians and librarians in order to understand their functional relationships to students and the educational process; challenging students; developing a classroom management plan; lesson planning; organizing the classroom for learning; and developing and maintaining positive relationships. The internship projects are real-life applications of previous learning. Samples of the internship projects were provided for "Organizing Your Classroom". This module contained three individual activities and one final capstone activity. The second internship project provided was campus interviews which consisted of 4 activities and a final capstone activity. "Classroom Management Plan" was also submitted for review. This project consisted of three activities and a final quiz. The fourth internship project is "Back To School Night/Open House". This project consisted of three activities and one final capstone activity. The lesson plan project consisted of three activities and one final quiz. "Dealing with Challenging Students" project consisted of four activities and a final quiz. "Building Relationships" project was also submitted for review. This project consisted of three activities and a final capstone activity. When the projects are completed, they are submitted to A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio electronically for evaluation. Specific

members of the A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio's staff have been trained to evaluate specific internship projects.

Evidence of compliance with program clock hours was found in the candidate's records and in the TEA required hours chart completed by the program. Each candidate was required to complete eighty-two (82) hours of face-to-face and online training and thirty (30) hours of field based instruction prior to internship. The program offers eighteen (18) hours of explicit test preparation. The Internship projects account for 120 clock hours of coursework. In addition, each candidate is required to secure fifty (50) clock hours of coursework credit from their school districts. Documentation of the fifty (50) hours was found in the candidates' records. The total number of clock hours for the elementary/middle, secondary and for the all level certification areas was 300 clock hours as prescribed by Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35(a)(3)(B).

A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio's alternative teacher certification program offered on-line test preparation using the Simulados software, an online test review program purchased by the program and available to the candidates at no cost. Each candidate is required to complete the test preparation material at an 80% mastery level prior to being recommended for the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) test. The program meets the explicit test preparation requirements of TAC §228.35(a)(3)(C).

As stated previously, A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio requires thirty (30) hours of field-based experiences. Fifteen (15) hours of field-based instruction is provided by video which was produced by A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio. The videos include focused observations that require the candidate to direct his/her attention to specific aspects of the classroom and instruction. In addition, the candidates are required to complete fifteen (15) hours of field-based observation in actual public or private school environments. Records of field-based observations were located in the candidates' records. However, in reviewing allowed activities, it is recommended that the program re-evaluate its allowable activities in light of the purpose of the experience. The outcome of the field-based experiences is for a candidate to be exposed to model teaching by an experienced teacher in a variety of grade level classrooms with a variety of students. The program is in compliance with the mandated thirty (30) clock hour of field-based observation minimums established in TAC §228.35(d)(1).

The program requires an internship of 180 days or an academic year. Evidence of compliance with internship requirements was found in the individual candidate's records and in questionnaire responses from the interns, field supervisors, and mentors [TAC §228.35(d)(2)(C)].

Sufficient evidence existed in the candidate folders that A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio had procedures to allow candidates to document fifty (50) hours of staff development delivered by the school districts. Documentation included certificates containing Continuing Professional Education (CPE) numbers and school district records/staff development transcripts [TAC §228.35(a)(5)].

Sufficient evidence existed in the candidates' records that all coursework and training was completed prior to program completion and prior to issuance of the standard certification as required in TAC §228.35(a)(4). The candidate was lock-stepped through the modules

comprising the A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio's curriculum. The candidate was unable to proceed to the next module until all requirements were met for the last module attempted. This is monitored through the A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio's electronic management system.

Sufficient evidence existed in the candidates' records in the form of teaching contracts that the teaching practicum fulfilled the TAC requirement. Internships were a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days or one academic year [TAC §228.35(f)]. The Houston ISD calendar was used to calculate the number of days of internship service. Ninety-seven point two percent (97.2%) of the responding interns indicated that their teaching placement matched the certification field for which they were accepted into the program. This information was verified in the internship documentation located in the candidates' folders [TAC §228.35(d)(2)]. However, only seventy percent (70%) indicated that the mentor taught the same grade level and content as the intern.

Fifty-seven (57) out of two hundred seventy four (274) cooperating teachers/mentors responded to their questionnaire. Of the respondents, fifty-seven point one (57.1%) percent indicated that they had received training through their school district, thirty point four (30.4%) percent indicated that they had received information from *New Teacher Induction: How to Train, Support, and Retain New Teachers* by Breaux and Wong. Additional resources were available for the mentor provided by A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio should they be needed. If the mentor received training from their school district, the mentor was asked to provide a record of the training to A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio [TAC §228.35(e)]. All information regarding mentor training was kept in a centralized database. A training log containing mentor names dates of training and who from the A+ Texas Teachers-Houston/San Antonio's staff conducted the training was included in the document review.

One notable area for improvement that was revealed in the mentors' survey was their feeling of not being an active partner in the internship process. In comments, mentors reported that the field supervisors did not acknowledge them or confer with them during field observation visits. The field supervisor did not seek information from the mentor on intern practices seen on a daily basis. It is recommended that the mentor teacher be included as an integral part of the candidates' preparation team by having the field supervisor's contact and conference with the mentor teacher and the intern jointly at least twice during the internship period. Also, continual active communication via email is encouraged between these two vital partners of the internship process.

A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio has a total of thirty-two (32) field supervisors with sixty-three point six percent (63.6%) reporting that they had been field supervisors for three to five years. The self-report indicated that the field supervisors are experienced with ninety point nine percent (90.9%) having a minimum of five (5) years of teaching/administrative experience. Eighty-one point eight percent (81.8%) are currently certified in Texas and nine point one percent (9.1%) are certified educators from other states. Ninety point nine percent (90.9%) of the field supervisors indicated that they had advanced degrees. Sixty-three point three percent (63.3%) indicated that they had previously been a principal or superintendent of schools. This information was verified in review of the field supervisors' resumes. It was also noted that field supervisors' names were listed on the official observation forms and field supervisors input information in the electronic records of the candidates through the coach's portal [TAC §228.35(f)].

A training record for the field supervisors was provided in the document review. The training dates recorded were mostly for 2009 with one date listed in 2010. In discussions with Stephaney Kennedy, it was found that since the field supervisors are assigned to specific regions of Texas and she provided training to the field supervisors as she travels to that site. She also indicated that the training records were not up to date with many trainings not recorded but that the information would be updated through the electronic management system. This area will be improved with the implementation of the new management system [TAC §228.35(f)].

Initial contact between the candidate and the field supervisor occurred within the first three weeks of assignment as reported in the self-report. Seventy-nine point two percent (79.2%) of candidates confirmed this and ninety point three percent (90.3%) indicated that the most common type of contact was via email. During the document review, it was noted that it was difficult to determine that the initial contact between the field supervisor and the candidate occurred within the first three weeks timeline because the start date of the intern's assignment was not specifically recorded in every candidate's records. It is recommended that the official candidate start date be recorded in a systematic manner so that it facilitates validation of the first contact occurring within the first three (3) weeks and of the first observation occurring within the first six (6) weeks of the assignment [TAC §228.35(f)].

Ninety-two point seven percent (92.7%) of the candidates reported that their formal observations by their field supervisor were forty-five (45) minutes or more in duration [TAC §228.35(f)] followed by an interactive conference. This information was also verified in the self-report and the candidate folder review. It was noted that the candidates' records contained documentation of three formal observations for the first year probationary interns. However, evidence of the required number of observations that should be present for second and third year interns were not present.

It was stated in the self-report that the program requires that the first formal observation of the candidate occurs within the first six (6) weeks of the assignment. One hundred percent (100%) of the field supervisors reported that they conducted their first formal observation within the first six (6) weeks of the semester and provided interactive feedback [TAC 228.35(f)]. However, it was unclear whether or not the principal received a copy of the observation form in accordance with TAC §228.35(f).

Sufficient evidence existed that informal observations and coaching were provided by the field supervisor as appropriate. This was stated in the self-report and in the field supervisors' questionnaire, one hundred percent (100%) of the field supervisors reported that they provided additional coaching or support to their teaching candidates. During the document review, conference logs with dates indicated that conferences had taken place. Eighty-four point five percent (84.5%) of the candidates reported they were provided with informal observations and/or coaching as needed [TAC §228.35(f)].

Based on the evidence presented, A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.35-PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT.

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

Findings:

A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio’s alternative teacher certification program staff has identified established benchmarks for candidate progress. Activities, reflections, workbook activities and quizzes were embedded throughout the online training. Candidates were required to successfully complete the online coursework with an eighty percent (80%) mastery before continuing to the next module. Candidates were constantly monitored and support was made available to the intern through the intern portal, by phone, and by face-to-face communication. Numerous email reminders were sent to ensure that the interns were informed of their next steps as well as the various services that were available to them [TAC §228.40(a)]. Interns were required to pass an online pedagogy practice exam with a score of 80% or higher in order to be recommended for testing. Successful completion of online coursework also served as documentation of a candidate’s readiness to test [TAC §228.40(b)]. Sufficient evidence existed that granting test approval was provided after admission and full acceptance into the program. This information was verified in the student record review in the form of an admission date [TAC §228.40(b)].

According to the self-report, candidates struggling in the program were provided an intervention plan that included such things as additional coaching visits, additional or repeated training, professional development and/or required readings and/or projects. If the intern is not considered adequate by both the field supervisor and the principal, the intern may be required to repeat their internship year along with other program requirements or possibly be released from the program.

A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio reported that the overall teacher preparation program is evaluated by the program director, instructors, advisory committee members, public and private school administrators, mentors, candidates, and human resource directors more than once every twelve (12) months. A variety of data sources, including ASEP data, advisory committee input, and qualitative evaluations from teaching candidates, principals, school district staff, faculty members, cooperating teachers/mentors, and program staff was listed in the self – report as being utilized. Candidate retention data was also reported as being used as well as the number of testing attempts by each candidate.

Coursework, as reported in the self-report, was evaluated during the training portion by gathering surveys from the candidates. The overall curriculum is evaluated using data gathered from candidate surveys, the Texas Education Agency reporting system, trainers meetings, and reported needs and requests from the districts the program serves [TAC 240.40(c)].

One hundred percent (100%) of the advisory committee members reported that they participated in evaluating the program. They also confirmed (80%) that evaluation was ongoing more than once every 12 months.

In evaluating the overall program, the advisory committee reported using qualitative evaluations from students (100%), principals (80%), student retention information (60%), the number of students passing the TExES on the first attempt (100%), and/or the number of testing attempts

by each student (100%) were reported as reviewed. However, there was not a preponderance of evidence to support that this data was gathered or utilized. It was noted that there were individual candidate program evaluations in the document review. In reviewing the advisory committee agenda for the last meeting, a topic was not listed to identify that evaluative data was discussed. No artifacts representing evaluative data were available in the document review and a systematic plan for program evaluation was not available to the TEA staff [TAC §228.40(c)]. It is recommended that a systematic written plan for program evaluation is developed that requires use of specific data sets.

Candidate records were kept in both paper and electronic formats for five years in a secure environment [TAC §228.40(d)].

Based on evidence presented, A+ Texas Teachers–Houston/San Antonio is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.40-ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

Senate Bill 174/Texas Administrative Code §229

Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

Pass Rate Performance:	2007-2008 Final 80%Standard	2008-2009 Final 80% Standard	2009-2010 70% Pass Rate
Overall:	100%	100%	100%

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency Compliance Audit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any component, please consult the Texas Administrative Code and initiate actions to correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A Compliance Status Report will be required in sixty (60) days.

General program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement and do not require follow-up.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: A Compliance Status Report will be required in sixty (60) days.

None at this time.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.

- Expand the depth of the advisory committee by adding more advisory committee members from across the state where candidates are located;
- Add additional advisory committee members such as mentors and interns who are not affiliated with A+ Texas Teachers such as a curriculum specialist, faculty instructor, or coach to bring an added level of objectivity to the program;
- Provide a written summary of the audio recordings of the advisory committee conference call discussions/decisions as a way to ensure understanding as well as a means to keep absent members engaged in the process;
- Develop an advisory committee handbook for members detailing the operation of the advisory committee and their roles and responsibilities;
- Provide advisory committee training annually to ensure all advisory committee members are reminded of their responsibilities in program development, policy decisions, evaluation, and field experiences for candidates;
- Develop a uniform set of interview questions to be used in screening potential candidates and a series of impression indicators to be completed by advisors during the interview. Place this information in the candidate's permanent record;
- Ensure as modules are revised that the 17 items specified in TAC §228.30 are more transparent to the candidates;
- Continue to add rigor and depth to the preparation content as the modules are revised;
- Bring terminology in line with Texas Administrative Code (Professional Coach–Field Supervisor);
- Ensure that all educator standards are addressed in course content especially in the Generalist EC-6 certification area as well as other certification areas offered;
- Ensure that content methodology is provided for each certification area offered;
- Provide more focus to the on-site 15 hours of field based experiences;
- Become more rigid in what is allowed as previous experience credit in field based experiences;
- Alter the field supervisor observation forms to include more observation focus, the start and end time of both the observation and the feedback/debriefing session and the signature of the candidate who has been observed;
- Establish a method to record training of field supervisors and provide frequent training opportunities;

- Adhere strictly to the contact and observation timelines for candidates;
- Include the mentor teacher as a integral part of the candidate preparation team by having the field supervisors contact and conference with the mentor teacher and the intern;
- Provide more information and support to a first time mentor as to the program's expectations and their role on the team;
- Add a means to assess student understanding of content in the face-to-face sessions other than self-reflection and evaluation (pre and post test);
- Provide all required data to TEA in a timely fashion;
- Continue to emphasize academic integrity by continuing to require that all candidates electronically sign the "Academic Integrity statement" monthly in the intern portal;
- Develop a short orientation for candidates on how to use and navigate the on-line modules; and
- Utilize the TEA training modules to address the teachers' responsibilities for TAKS found at www.TexasAssessment.com/Taonlinetraining.
- Develop a systematic, data driven plan for evaluating both the entire program and the curriculum coursework. Include frequency of evaluation, people involved, data to be gathered and analyzed, and processes to implement change. Include as an advisory committee agenda item discuss of program and curriculum evaluation.