

Compliance Report for Monitoring Visit 2009-2010

Alamo Community College District – Northwest Vista College

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. The Texas Education Agency 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 of each rule.

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A technical assistance visit of the Alamo Community College District (ACCD) – Northwest Vista College alternative certification educator preparation program was conducted on February 22-25, 2010 by Texas Education Agency (TEA) Program Specialist, Sandra Jo Nix, and Manager, David Carmody.

Alamo Community College District's central administration was asked to respond to the Governance and Admission Criteria portion of the self-report. ACCD- Northwest Vista College was asked to respond to the Curriculum, Field Experience and Support, and Evaluation portion of the self-report.

Self- Report Submitted: ACCD - September 14, 2009; ACCD-Northwest Vista College - February 19, 2010

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

Findings:

Alamo Community College District (ACCD) – Northwest Vista College is in compliance with TAC §228.20 Governance of Educator Preparation Programs. The operation of the advisory committee currently is the responsibility of the Alamo Community College District's central administration. ACCD- Northwest Vista College participates as part of the advisory committee consisting of 14 members who represent public school districts, an education service center, and business and community interests. Currently, there are three vacant positions on the advisory committee. Bylaws have been created to guide the operation of the advisory committee. Meetings are scheduled quarterly. However, there have been some gaps in meetings with the restructuring of the ACCD program. Attendance records, agendas, and minutes were available for the October, 2009 and January, 2010 meeting. Additional meetings are scheduled for April and August.

One of the strengths of the advisory committee is the consistency and tenure of the members. The outgoing Chair of the ACCD Advisory Committee served in that position

for three years. According to the advisory committee questionnaire, the members understand their roles and responsibilities and actively participate in assisting ACCD-Northwest Vista College in design, delivery, policy decisions and program evaluation. In the advisory committee questionnaire administered last summer, 100% of the members indicated they do not participate in program evaluation. However in reviewing the minutes provided in the document review, evaluative information was shared with the advisory committee on a consistent basis. No evidence of discussing field-based experiences could be located. Because of the importance of the advisory committee's contributions, it is suggested to provide training annually and to develop a handbook to help guide the activities and responsibilities of the committee.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 - GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM. In light of the findings detailed above, Alamo Community College District-Northwest Vista College is in compliance.

Commendations:

Alamo Community College District's Advisory Committee is commended for meeting quarterly.

Alamo Community College District's Advisory Committee is commended for operating with the guidance of bylaws.

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

Findings:

Alamo Community College District (ACCD) – Northwest Vista College is in compliance with TAC §227.10 Admission Criteria. Alamo Community College District's Central Administration in cooperation with Northwest Vista College established uniform admission requirements for all ACCD colleges in 2008. According to the self-report and information posted on Northwest Vista College's website, admission criteria includes a bachelor's degree, 2.5 grade point average or in the last 60 hours, passing scores on a basic skills assessment, participate in an interview, and provide a signed application which includes three essay questions. In addition, each applicant is required to provide three references. Admission criteria were confirmed by review of the Northwest Vista College's student folders. Through statements on the Northwest Vista College's website and in the recruiting material, sufficient evidence exists that admission criteria are applied in an equitable manner for all candidates. Northwest Vista College indicated that they do not admit any students under the 10% cohort rule.

According to the admission criteria on the website and confirmed while conducting the document review, the TOEFL is used to determine language fluency for out- of- country students. Transcript evaluations are also required by an approved credentialing service.

The TEA review of student folders indicated a few students who had been involved in the program for an extended period of time because of the difficulty in finding teaching positions. Northwest Vista College should apply for clinical teaching in order to accommodate these candidates and have them complete the program in a timely fashion. This may help the program attract individuals that would be able to participate in an alternative way of completing the requirements.

Candidate recruitment includes brochures, career and job fairs, media outlets such as newspapers, mass mailings to local graduates, and participating in the San Antonio Area Personnel Administrators Association. In addition, outreach efforts include Troops to Teachers and Para-professional development days. During the document review, TEA saw samples of recruitment materials. Recruiting efforts should be reviewed and intensified in order to increase the number of participants in the program.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA. In light of the findings detailed above, the Alamo Community College District – Northwest Vista College is in compliance.

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

Findings:

Alamo Community College District - Northwest Vista College is in compliance with TAC §228.30 Educator Preparation Curriculum. Northwest Vista College has ten adjunct faculty members. Each faculty member has Master's degrees and all are Texas certified teachers. It was noted that the majority of faculty members have many years of public school experience.

Northwest Vista College presented syllabi for the Generalist EC-6 and Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) EC-12, Bilingual Generalist Spanish EC-6, and Special Education EC-12. The EC-6 Generalist is the most recent module to be revised because of the change from EC-4 to EC-6. Evidence of instruction of the 17 curriculum topics required in TAC §228.30 was available and correlated to number of hours of instruction through documentation provided by the PPR instructor and the coordinator. Intern responses on the questionnaires from this college indicated that minimal improvement needed to be made in the instruction of the 17 curriculum area topics. The areas that the interns indicated needed improvement are reading strategies across the curriculum (25%), process of curriculum development (37.5%), and laws and standards regarding students with special education needs (37.5%), and differentiating or changing instruction to meet individual student needs(28.6%).

It is strongly recommended that an intense curriculum development and revision project be initiated the summer of 2010 to address curriculum improvement under the direction of an ACCD Program Director. It is evident that all of the college programs would benefit from having a program director with the responsibility of overall coordination of all aspects of the ACCD's teacher education programs. This curriculum project should have all the educator preparation program staff work as a team. Because of the time and cost involved in this endeavor, this arrangement would allow for the maximum utilization of resources. The products of this project should be standardized curriculum guides for each active certification area to be used by the instructors in each college's educator preparation program to ensure consistency. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that Northwest Vista College participate in the development of a new, expanded technology module. Successful completion of the technology module would be required by all teaching students. Each course developed should use highly interactive modes of instruction, modeling of specific instructional strategies by the instructor, and focused practice of skills by the teaching candidates.

In reviewing the course syllabi, it was noted that a consistent format was used. The syllabi included instructor information, course description, course prerequisites, student learning outcomes, course objectives, textbooks and required materials, performance measures, and student responsibilities. However, the syllabi would be strengthened if they included more information about ways the students would be assessed for content mastery and skill attainment. Also, it would be helpful to make the content of a course more transparent, especially the seventeen mandated content areas, by providing a course outline of topics to be covered.

Northwest Vista and Palo Alto Colleges share two hybrid courses. The first is a Generalist EC-6 course and the other is a Pedagogy and Professional Practices EC-12 (PPR) course. The face-to-face portion of these courses is taught one day per month. The online portions are taught once a week for the rest of the month. Several textbooks are used as resources. In the EC-6 Generalist course, activities include development of a thematic unit incorporating the TEKS in all core disciplines. Portions of the thematic unit are presented to the class for critique. Both courses include class readings and online discussions. Students are expected to participate in discussions and to respond to discussions items posted by two other classmates.

Test preparation is addressed through the Simulados software. The Simulados software program requires that each student have a user password that allows access to various aspects of the software. Practice tests or the study mode, which provides questions and then provides the correct way to answer the question and why, are available. The software also has a management system that allows the instructor and student to view the domains that need additional work. However, the Simulados software does not track the number of hours or minutes that the student is on task. This additional feature needs to be requested from the software developer in order to adequately track the number of hours spent by the candidate in test preparation.

In addition, faculty members provide dedicated time in their classes to address specific testing topics and issues. The time spent on this class activity is not documented in the syllabi at this time. It is suggested each syllabus include a statement of the date and time expected to be spent reviewing a testing topic. Since the time the student spends on the Simulados software and in class reviewing for the test cannot be verified, it suggested that a free-standing six hour professional development course be added to ensure proper student test preparation and to meet the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(17) and §228.35(C).

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM. In light of the findings detailed above, Alamo Community College District – Northwest Vista College is in compliance.

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

Findings:

The Alamo Community College District – Northwest Vista College is in compliance with TAC §228.35 Program Delivery and On-going Support with the exception of TAC §228.35(e) which requires mentor training.

ACCD-Northwest Vista's facilities are spacious, well maintained, and resources for faculty and students are available. The courses are delivered in a face-to-face and hybrid format.

ACCD-Northwest Vista College meets the requirements of 300 clock hours of instruction. Thirty clock hours of field experiences are required. Teaching candidates respond to the field experiences by writing a reflective journal and keeping a time log which is signed by the teacher whose classroom they visited. The reflective journal is not focused on specific aspects of the classroom or of the teaching observed. Therefore, it is suggested that a standardized field experience document be developed with focused observation activities such as taking a class census, noting teacher transition techniques, classroom management and motivational strategies. Candidates should also be required to engage students in tutoring activities, small group reading, and other activities that allow the candidate to have actual face-to-face interactions with students.

Thirty-two hours of professional development training are required of the teaching interns. These sessions are presented on designated Saturdays and cover a variety of topics. Sign-in sheets were available for review during the TEA document review process. Professional development activities should be made available to teachers who have completed the ACCD teacher preparation program and are now in their 2nd through 5th year of teaching. This will be a good public relations tool as well as show the current and future ACCD students your continued interest and support after completion of the ACCD program.

Northwest Vista has two part-time field supervisors who are certified educators with at least five years classroom teaching experience. Both field supervisors reported that they are TxBESS trained. In discussions with the field supervisors, they reported an intern to field supervisor ratio of ten to one. The coordinator of the program indicated in discussions that should an individual field supervisor's responsibility exceed this number, additional staff will be hired.

First contact with the intern, first formal observation, observation time and interactive feedback are conducted as required by TAC rule §228.35. This was confirmed through the field supervisor, mentor teacher, and intern responses on their questionnaires as well as on observation records found in the student folders. After an observation, the field supervisors provide a copy of the observation and a note to the principal. Some concern was expressed by the field supervisors that their observations are so detailed that their notes may give the principal the wrong perception of the intern and also destroy intern/field supervisor trust.

Forty percent (40%) of the mentor teachers reported having more than 21 years of experience. However, eighty percent (80%) of the responding teachers said this was

the first intern that they had worked with. One area of concern was that sixty percent (60%) of the responding mentors indicated that they did not received training on the expectations of mentoring or mentoring techniques. It is necessary that training is made available yearly per TAC §228.35(e) and a handbook be developed for consistency throughout the program. All the mentor teachers (100%) responding to their questionnaire indicated that they had no concerns with the academic preparation of the interns. From an interview with the field supervisors, it was confirmed that one three way conference was held with intern and mentor.

In order to strengthen communication with the campus administrator, it is recommended a letter of introduction is sent to the intern's principal outlining the training and other educational preparation that been provided to the intern previously and what expectations will be expected for the intern during the teaching practicum.

Compliance status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING. In light of the findings detailed above, the Alamo Community College District – Northwest Vista College is in compliance with the exception of TAC 228.35(e) which requires mentor training.

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

Findings:

The Alamo Community College District- Northwest Vista College is in compliance with TAC §228.40 Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

Northwest Vista College has implemented an individualized educational plan for teaching candidates that is currently being used on an as needed basis. There is a possibility of expanding this procedure to a “course completion plan” format that will be used among all the colleges. A candidate checklist, test preparation software, and an Excel database are used to benchmark student progress. A series of checklists such as the program enrollment process checklist, coursework progress checklist, intern process checklist, and intern follow- up checklists are used to track the student through the program. The follow-up process checklist is designed to follow the completed ACCD interns for five years.

On-going support is provided for candidates who may be struggling in the program through faculty intervention and individual candidate tutoring. However, there appears to be no college-wide support systems such as a counseling center, student tutoring center or writing center, are in place.

Curriculum evaluation is conducted at Northwest Vista College on an ongoing basis and also at the district level. The most recent revisions have been to the Generalist EC-6 program. A committee consisting of ACCD coordinators, current and past instructors, a school district curriculum director/advisory committee member served on the Generalist EC-6 revision committee.

An overall program evaluation is conducted twice a year. Surveys are distributed to school district staff, and current/past interns. Candidates evaluate the course content, effectiveness, and the instructors. ACCD central administration breaks down data by college and content areas. An evaluation report is compiled and submitted for review to advisory committee members, deans, presidents and the ACCD Governing Board.

Student records are kept at Northwest Vista College for a minimum of five years in a secure environment.

Grievance procedures are outlined in the Northwest Vista College catalog and in the intern handbook. Procedures for exiting the educator preparation program are outlined in the college catalogue. Staff members have been identified and trained at Northwest Vista College on the ASEP accountability system.

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, Alamo Community College District – Northwest Vista College is in compliance.

Commendations:

The Alamo Community College District- Northwest Vista College is commended for tracking completed interns for five years.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency Technical Visit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any component, please consult the TAC rules and initiate actions to correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A progress report will be required in one year to ensure compliance with recommendations.

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

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: A Progress Report will be required in one year.

- Provide or arrange training yearly for ACCD mentors on their roles and responsibilities as well as mentoring techniques as per TAC 228.35(e). This should be initiated immediately.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support the hiring of a program director to coordinate all ACCD teacher education programs and activities to provide for more consistency.
- Support the development of an overarching structure of program/curriculum planning, and coordination among all Alamo Community College District colleges. This is strongly recommended.

- Apply to TEA for clinical teaching in order to accommodate candidates who are not able to find teaching jobs. This is strongly recommended.
- Initiate a program of curriculum improvement in all certification areas. This is strongly recommended.
- Develop a free-standing 6 hour training session covering testing topics. This is strongly recommended.
- Develop a handbook which outlines the complete and detailed roles and responsibilities of the advisory committee.
- Provide yearly training for the advisory council.
- Review and intensify recruiting efforts in order to increase the educator preparation programs.
- Develop an expanded technology course that addresses both management and instructional technology and require completion of the course by all teaching candidates.
- Open the professional development courses to allow teachers who have completed the ACCD program and are in their 2nd-5th years of teaching to attend.
- Develop and send a letter to all principals where an intern is placed introducing the intern and outlining expectations and Texas Administrative Code rules.
- Revise field experiences to make them more focused and meaningful.