



Compliance Visit Report 2009-2010 Austin Community College

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contact Person: Sharon Duncan

Mixon Henry, Program Specialist, and Dr. Phillip Eaglin, M, Program Specialist, conducted a Texas Education Agency Continuing Approval visit on February 4-5, 2010. The following is an Executive Summary of the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date self-report submitted: September 8, 2009

COMPONENT I: COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION – Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs

Findings:

Austin Community College is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation.

Austin Community College (ACC) held an advisory committee meeting in the fall of 2009 and on October 4, 2009. The spring 2010 advisory committee meeting is being scheduled at this time to be held on February 18, 2010. Agendas, minutes, and sign-in sheets were available to substantiate that the advisory committee meetings were held. ACC has kept the documentation of meetings, sign-in sheets, agendas, and minutes since 2002. The current Advisory Committee consists of fifteen (15) members from local school districts, education service centers, higher education, and community/business interests.

The Advisory Committee had eleven (11) of the fifteen (16) members return electronic questionnaires. ACC has added new members to the Advisory Committee; three (3) in the last six months. There are still members from the original 2002 Advisory Committee. It is apparent from the questionnaire that the majority of the Advisory Committee is aware of their roles. In reviewing the minutes of meetings, the Advisory Committee provides input and assists in the evaluation process.

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

COMMENDATIONS:

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

Findings:

Austin Community College is in compliance with TAC Rule §227.10 Admission Criteria. ACC's admission requirements for the teacher preparation program include a bachelor's degree, Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5 out of a 4.0 in the last 60 hours, a completed application, a face to face interview with staff member (documenting responses on instrument and grading with a rubric), 24 hours in content area if secondary candidate, resume, successful background check, and three (3) letters of reference.

In reviewing the student files, it was noted that a majority of the accepted candidates had GPAs well above the minimum required 2.5.

The recruitment for the program is addressed through the website, Advisory Committee, school and community visits, Channel 19 television station, brochures, and word-of-mouth.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA. In light of the findings detailed above, Austin Community College is in compliance.

Commendations:

ACC's admissions criteria requires of the additional components background checks, letters of reference, and face to face interviews provide a better method to assess the candidates.

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

Findings:

Austin Community College is in compliance with TAC rule §228.30, Educator Preparation Curriculum.

Most of the program's instructors have attained advanced degrees, are certified teachers in the state of Texas, and have teaching experience in public schools. Many are working in leadership positions and some have won district and campus awards. Instructors are hired based on their expertise in a content or specialty area. Therefore it is possible that an instructor will only teach one or two courses in which he/she is an expert.

In review of the curriculum correlations, Austin Community College's curriculum covers the required 17 items of the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility. Course syllabi include objectives, materials needed, content of course, activities, grading criteria, and assessments to denote the progress of the candidate. In reviewing interns' electronic questionnaires, it was revealed that 100% of the interns considered the syllabi complete and clear. It is obvious that the program is successful at embedding the 17 curriculum items throughout the curriculum and continually spiral reinforcement of them throughout the program of study. Technology curriculum is addressed in seven (7) manners using a variety of technology to expand the options for the educator. It is required that during observations, technology is incorporated in the lesson.

Austin Community College's test preparation is fourteen hours for the TExES tests. The test preparations include a review of terms, specific vocabulary issues, and scenarios. All of this is reviewed prior to the practice test to clarify terminology, create a working knowledge of the information, and gain confidence. This is a factor in the successful test results of the program (99%-100% pass rate over the last three years).

Feedback from candidates' electronic questionnaires reported the need for improvement in the following curriculum areas: reading strategies across the curriculum, utilizing TEKS in content areas, and standards and teaching strategies for gifted and talented. Since these topics are present in their curriculum, discussions were held with program staff to emphasize and reinforce these identified items in the curriculum.

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

Commendations:

Austin Community College's curriculum syllabi are well conceived and formatted to have clear objectives, standards, activities, calendar and timelines, contact information, and grading criteria.

The 17 PPR items are clearly embedded in the curriculum and spiral throughout the curriculum to assist in review and recall.

Austin Community College provides 14 clock hours of test preparation, more than doubles the required amount, which plays a factor in the testing success of 99%-100% over the last three (3) years.

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

Findings:

Austin Community College is in compliance with TAC rule §228.35, Program Delivery and On-Going Support. Austin Community College provides personal service to its applicants and candidates. The staff is made up of professional educators with significant experience as teachers and/or with the community college.

There is strong evidence of ongoing training. Austin Community College's total training and coursework hours exceeds the state requirement of 300 clock hours. Please note that Austin Community College does accept district training hours (50 clock hours), but still exceeds the state requirement.

The program's field experience meets state requirements of 30 clock hours and candidates follow-up with written reflections and required documentation. A highlight of the program's field experience is the "Tutors with Vision"; a partnership with Austin Independent School District assisting at-risk students. This program was created and implemented by an instructor that provides the required 30 clock hours of field experience and assists students in remediation for the Texas Academic Knowledge and Skills Test (TAKS). It has now expanded to several high schools and middle schools campuses and contributed in student success on TAKS. Prior to internship, the candidates exceed the require 80 hours of curriculum coursework. The candidates also receive more than the allotted 6 hours of test preparation at the appropriate point in their preparation program. Observations of interns are performed three or more times, per the appropriate schedule, which includes a 45 minute observation, written and oral feedback, and interactive conferencing. The observation instrument is a modified PDAS instrument that displays five categories and space for anecdotal comments. All staff and advisors are past certified educators. They guide the candidates through the requirements with face-to-face meetings and informal contact to simplify the process. The teaching practicum meets or exceeds the required number of hours.

Training for mentors is provided by Austin Community College with the following: TxBESS training, mentor agreement, and handbook review. The training dates were noted in the document review, but for those that cannot attend, an online training is offered. Attendance or completion of one of the other is required by the program. Mentors are compensated with a \$400 stipend at the end of the internship, unless a stipend is provided by the district.

Field Supervisors' qualifications include the following: advanced degrees, experienced professional educator currently certified in Texas, former administrators, and a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience. Austin Community College also looks for field supervisors who are committed to mentoring new teachers, have dynamic communication and people skills, and are dedicated to the program's mission and core values. Training for field supervisors is accomplished through TxBess training, coaching techniques, mentoring methods, and handbook review. Austin Community College has a ratio of field supervisor to intern averages of 1 to 12 - 15. Intern electronic questionnaires revealed 90% satisfaction with the effectiveness of field supervisors.

Austin Community College offers coursework and classes to the general public and candidates from other programs often attend the classes. The ACC's website provided a volume of links to enhance their lessons, assist in testing, and become more knowledgeable of local districts

Struggling candidates receive individual support, often involving not only coaching from staff, but a customized plan developed cooperatively with the mentor, field supervisor, candidate and other personnel as needed.

Compliance status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING. In light of the findings detailed above, Austin Community College is in compliance.

Commendations:

Austin Community College is commended for collaborating with Austin Independent School to create a field experience "Tutors with Vision" that allows candidates to gather the 30 clock hours and assist students with remediation on the TAKS test.

Austin Community College's curriculum is above the required 300 clock hours.

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

Findings:

Austin Community College is in compliance with TAC rule 228.40, Assessment and Evaluation.

Student records are well organized and kept in secure cabinets in locked offices. Other documentation is kept electronically for at least five years. All of the documentation is arranged systematically for easy tracking of the candidate's progress in the program. Student folders provide evidence of benchmarks, assessments, test preparation and ethics understanding.

Evaluation of the program's curriculum and instructors is provided by candidates after each course/module and institute. An overall program evaluation of the program is completed by all members of the program including: Director, faculty, Advisory Committee, campus administrators, mentors/cooperation teachers, interns/clinical teachers, and HR directors. This gives a more complete picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Program evaluation takes place annually to refine or adjust to the needs of the interns and districts. Curriculum is evaluated by candidates' feedback, ASEP data, and advisory committee member input. Questionnaires are answered by interns, mentors, campus administrators, and field supervisors to obtain more feedback regarding program improvement. Data analysis of program evaluations is completed by both staff and advisory committee members.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 228.40 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT. In light of the findings detailed above, Austin Community College is in compliance.

Commendations:

Austin Community College is commended for developing an evaluation process that includes key stakeholders to gather reliable data.

Documentation of curriculum and student files is well organized by staff.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

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. Program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement. A progress report will be required in one year on Compliance Recommendations.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Provide copies of the intern's observations to campus administrators to comply with TAC rule 228.35(f).

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Seek the mentors' input about the intern to create a more collaborative atmosphere.

Continue the Tutors with Vision Program to enable candidate's field experience opportunities of interaction with students in a meaningful tutorial program where both parties gain valuable academic progress.

