



Compliance Audit Report 2010-2011 South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP

According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c), "An entity approved by the TEA 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 at www.tea.state.tx.us for details.

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County-District Number: 108706

Dr. Phillip Eaglin and Ms. Vanessa Alba, Program Specialists, conducted a Texas Education Agency (TEA) compliance audit on May 10-12, 2011. The following are the TEA findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date Self-Report Submitted: April 12, 2011

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A review of documents, syllabi, and curriculum correlation charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition electronic questionnaires were sent on one occasion to South Texas Transition to Teaching stakeholders by TEA. A total of one-hundred three (103) responses to the questionnaires were received by TEA, including forty two (42) out of one-hundred forty eight (148) from interns, six (6) out of seven (7) from field supervisors, eighteen (18) out of one-hundred forty eight (148) from school principals, thirty five (35) out of one-hundred forty one (141) from campus mentors, and two (2) out of seven (7) from advisory committee members. TEA staff determined that the program materials for the audit visit were not presented by the Program in an organized, complete manner as requested in the TEA Monitoring Visit handbook as well as during the Monitoring Visit Training Webinars.

The opening session was conducted on May 10, 2011. In attendance representing the staff of South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP were Mr. Carlos Gomez, Ms. Janie Luna, Ms. Diana Fausto, Ms. Jocelyn Goines, Ms. Daisy Villegas, Ms. Sylvia Gomez, and Mr. Gilbert Gomez, Program Director. The program's director presented the program's PowerPoint slides during the opening session and provided TEA staff with printed copies. The closing session was held on May 12, 2011. Present at the closing session were Mr. Carlos Gomez, Ms. Sylvia Gomez, Ms. Daisy Villegas, Ms. Janie Luna, and Mr. Gilbert Gomez.

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 South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP per TAC §228.20(c) as evidenced by Mr. Gilbert Gomez, Director, and other key staff members' participation in various aspects of the compliance audit.

The South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP is a collaborative effort among only two stakeholders groups. Per TAC §228.20(b), the advisory committee should include members representing as many as possible of the groups identified as collaborators. The advisory committee consists of seven (7) members listed in the self-report: four (4) from school districts; none from higher education, none from an education service center, and three (3) from business and community. To better secure the input of higher education and education service center staff and to present a more balanced perspective in decision making, it is recommended that members of higher education and education service center stakeholder groups be recruited and prepared to serve on the advisory committee. In addition, the advisory committee and the educator preparation program would benefit from increased depth of membership by including mentor teachers, interns, school district human resource directors, superintendents, principals, and additional members from the educational communities that it serves. In order to implement this suggestion, it is recommended that the program implement the use of virtual advisory committee meetings and explore the use of conference calls, webinars, and other appropriate technology to conduct the meetings. At the same time, the size of the committee must be considered in order to provide an environment for idea and information exchange through interactive dialogues. The composition of the advisory committee meets the requirements of TAC §228.20(b) since the committee has members representing as many as possible of the groups identified as collaborators. Agendas and minutes were provided for the following advisory committee meetings: March 6, 2007; October 23, 2007; March 4, 2008; October 15, 2008; March 5, 2009; October 8, 2009; April 29, 2010; October 5, 2010; and April 7, 2011. Two of the advisory committee members responded that meetings are held twice per academic year; the third member participating in the questionnaire skipped the question. Meeting notes for March 6, 2007, included a reflection on TEA commendations and recommendations provided from a previous TEA Audit Report. The minutes also reflected the following: committee members present; director's report; program report update; success and growth of the program; program challenges; questions/discussion opportunities; and announcements. Some of the other topics included: numbers of interns being hired; curriculum challenges; and the lack of content knowledge in physics and earth/space science as it relates to candidates wanting science composite 4-8 and 8-12.

Because of the importance of the advisory committee's contributions and since there are ongoing revisions being made to TAC, it is recommended that yearly training be provided to the members. Since the membership of the advisory committee, especially those new to the committee and those from the business and community group, may not be familiar with all of their roles in the analysis of program planning, evaluation and design, it is recommended that a distinct advisory committee handbook be developed to help guide the activities and

responsibilities of the committee. An example of such a handbook was provided to the preparation program by TEA staff.

On the TEA questionnaire, one out of two (50%) of the responding advisory committee members indicated they had served on the committee for four to five years, and one out of the two members (50%) indicated they had served on the advisory committee for one to three years. One hundred percent (100%) of the responding two (2) members on the questionnaire indicated that they were familiar with TAC §227, §228, and §229. The two advisory committee members responding to the questionnaire indicated that the type of teaching practicum offered by the program was “internship”. The two advisory committee members indicated that they understand the type of practicum offered by the program and/or the terminology of the TAC. One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents indicated that they do participate in designing or revising the educator preparation program’s curriculum. They also indicated that they participate (100%) in overall program evaluation. Prior to the end of the audit visit, the Program Director also shared a binder presented to advisory committee members that contained program data. Committee members should be provided with state and federal reports related to educator preparation and teacher effectiveness so that an overall program evaluation and recommendations can be made for program improvement. It is also strongly recommended that committee members continue to receive professional development regarding the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227, §228, and §229 so that all recommendations can be clear and measurable. The advisory committee appears to be involved in aspects of program design, delivery, and evaluation as required by TAC §228.20(b).

Based on evidence presented, South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP is in compliance with all the indicators reviewed in accordance with Texas Administration Code (TAC) §228.20.

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

Findings:

Per the self-report, information located on the program’s website, on the program’s PowerPoint, and in other documents presented at the compliance audit, in order to be admitted to the South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP, potential candidates must provide an official transcript, possess a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education or be within one semester of attaining a Bachelor’s degree, have a minimum GPA of 2.5 or above on a four-point scale, and participate in a screening process that includes completing an entrance interview with the program director. The “Elementary Transcript Information Tool”, which is used for analyzing candidate transcripts and a copy of the program’s online application were available for review. Most candidates’ folders included a signed application.

Overall, the candidates’ folders contained inconsistent documentation regarding whether or not candidates met all admission requirements. Program admission requirements could not be

verified on the website. Following the visit, the website was reviewed again on June 14, 2011, to verify admissions requirements. In review, again it was found that admission requirements could not be verified on the website. It is recommended that the admission requirements be published on all print and electronic materials (the website) and applied consistently to all educator preparation candidates, as required by TAC §227.10(a)(7) The South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP is not in compliance with TAC §227.10(a)(7).

On the South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP PowerPoint slides that were presented at the opening session, the admission requirements included the following: the applicant must demonstrate basic skills in reading, written communication, and mathematics by passing the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test or all parts of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) Basic Skills Test with a minimum score of 230 in mathematics and writing and a minimum score of 250 in reading to meet basic skills. A total of fourteen (14) candidate files were reviewed by TEA staff. Among the fourteen (14) files reviewed, data was collected for nine (9) last year finishers, three (3) current year candidates, one out-of-country applicant, and three (3) tutorial applicants. A pattern was established after nine of the finisher files were reviewed. However, of the fourteen (14) candidate folders reviewed, only five (5) of them had evidence of candidates meeting any of the basic skill requirements. The PowerPoint slides indicated that ACT or SAT scores were also accepted for admission. However, none of the candidate folders reviewed by TEA staff contained documentation that could confirm that ACT or SAT scores had been accepted for admission purposes. Per TAC §227.10(a)(4), for a program candidate who will be seeking an initial certificate, the candidate shall demonstrate basic skills in reading, written communication, and mathematics or by passing the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test or the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) with a minimum score of 230 in reading, 230 in mathematics, and 220 in writing. In the alternative, a candidate may demonstrate basic skills by meeting the requirements of the Texas Success Initiative (Texas Education Code, §51.3062) under the rules established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter C of this title (relating to Texas Success Initiative). One candidate's folder also contained a writing THEA score that did not meet the minimum score of 220 in writing. It is recommended that the program requirements are aligned with the minimum THEA scores for reading, mathematics, and writing, as required by TAC §227.10(a)(4). The South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP is not in compliance with TAC §227.10(4), basic skills requirements.

The Director stated in the opening session presentation that one of the admission requirements was to complete an interview. However, he also stated that he only conducts the oral interview if in initial screening by South Texas Transition to Teaching staff indicated a need for oral language proficiency screening. TEA program specialists also noted that it was stated by South Texas Transition to Teaching staff that the oral interview is conducted in Spanish. No evidence was available to determine if and how the interview used for admission to the program was evaluated by the program staff. It is recommended that the program staff develop and utilize rating criteria for evaluating oral communication skills and that evidence of the interview results are maintained for each candidate in their admissions file.

The Director's PowerPoint slides also included a note that part of the application process includes a one page essay titled "Why I want to become a Teacher". A review of candidates'

folders determined that a written essay is required of candidates, but was not a consistent requirement documented in the folders. Additionally, there was no rubric available for TEA program specialists to determine how the essay was evaluated. It is recommended that a rubric with defined scoring criteria aligned to the specific certification sought be used to ensure equity in the application process and that the completed rubric be included in each applicant's file.

It is also recommended that the program specify the criteria of either an interview or other screening instrument to determine the educator preparation candidate's appropriateness for the certification sought, as required by TAC §227.10(a)(6). The South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP is not in compliance with TAC §227.10(a)(6).

Nine (9) of the applicant files reviewed contained a Grade Point Average (GPA) of two point five (2.5) or higher and met the GPA requirements of TAC §227.10(A). One of the applicant files reviewed contained GPA evidence that was below the two point five (2.5) GPA. According to South Texas Transition to Teaching's self-report and information provided during the compliance audit, less than 10% of candidates currently in the program were admitted under the 10% cohort rule.

In the program's self-report and the Director's PowerPoint slides, the TOEFL was not identified as used to determine if a candidate is able to speak and understand English language sufficiently to use it easily and readily in conversation and teaching. A program flyer was provided to TEA staff that included the following program requirements that were not included in the Director's PowerPoint slides: "Foreign degrees accepted: however you must have a minimum score of 26 on the speaking portion of the Test of English as a Foreign Language-Internet Based Test". TEA staff confirmed that one candidate from out-of-country did not have evidence of the TOEFL in the admissions folder. However, the candidate held a Master's degree in Science Engineering from UT Pan Am with a GPA of 3.85, and an out-of-country BS in Mechatronics Engineering from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. Since there was documentation that the candidate qualified under another provision for oral language fluency as specified in TAC §230.413, South Texas Transition to Teaching is in compliance with TAC §227.10(a)(5). The candidate's file also contained evidence of a review of credentials from an approved credentialing service. The file was evaluated by Global Credential Evaluators, Inc. and met the requirements of TAC §227.10(7)(e).

South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP disseminates recruiting information to potential candidates through the program's website, career fairs, a brochure, handouts provided to University of Texas–Pan American's Career Advisement Center, and media outlets.

Based on the evidence provided, South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227.10-Admission Requirements.

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

Findings:

The program's instructors consist of six (6) members who include: the Program Director; local teachers; university professor/medical student; and education service center staff. The names of six (6) field supervisors and seven (7) contract office staff were also listed in the audit materials. A review of the faculty and field supervisor background information presented in the document review found that all instructors for which there was background information appeared to be Texas certified with varying years of experience; some resumes were not included in the documentation. Of the field supervisor resumes that were provided, one holds an EdD. and six hold a Masters degree.

Eighty-two percent (82%) (31 of 38 respondents) of the interns responded on their TEA questionnaire that they had been provided with a clear and concise course syllabus. In reviewing the online course syllabi from South Texas Transition to Teaching, it was found that the program did not require common components in the course syllabi. Alignment to the 17 curriculum topics mandated by TAC §228.35 was not verifiable through the curriculum materials reviewed by TEA staff during the visit. It is recommended that all syllabi utilize a standard format and provide a more intentional presentation of the relevant 17 topics, the TEKS, and the TEA educator standards that are aligned with the educator preparation courses. TEA staff provided a list of recommended common components to include in the syllabi.

Areas that interns would like the program to strengthen were: teacher's responsibilities for administering the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills examination (29%); how to develop a lesson (26%); and standards and teaching strategies for students designated as gifted and talented (24%). It is recommended that the program seek assistance through presentations from local school district testing coordinators on the administration of TAKS/STAAR responsibilities or utilize the modules created by TEA which can be accessed at www.TexasAssessment.com/Taonlinetraining. In addition, it is recommended that the program add to its requirements the local school campus requirement that interns participate in the 30-hour gifted and talented professional development offered by their campus.

Per TAC §228.10(e), an educator preparation program that is rated "accredited," as provided in §229.3 of this title (relating to The Accreditation Process), may request additional certification fields by submitting a curriculum matrix with a description of how the standards for Texas beginning educators are incorporated into the educator preparation program's curriculum. The Generalist EC-6 certification field was the curricular area identified as the primary focus of this compliance audit. TAC §228.30(a) requires that the curriculum be aligned to the relevant educator standards as the curricular basis for each certification field of the educator preparation program's curriculum. As required by TAC §228.35(b), the educator preparation program shall provide candidates with coursework and/or training that is directly related to that certification area and is aligned to the state standards for the applicable certification field. The Program

Director completed the curriculum matrixes for the Generalist EC-6 content areas during to compliance visit. He also provided randomly selected curriculum artifacts for TEA program specialists to evaluate for alignment to TEA standards.

A review of the Generalist EC-6 course syllabus included the following information: Instructor name; contact information including phone number and email address; course description; and program policies. It is important to note that the objectives/goals for the course were stated in the syllabus as: "By the end of this class you will possess enough content and pedagogical knowledge to challenge and pass the TExES EC-6 Content area exam. You will possess a basic understanding of the English Language Arts and Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, Art, Health, and PE required of an elementary teacher and the responsibilities incumbent upon that certification." It was also stated in the course objectives/goals that "Each of these domains are broken down into competencies that will be the focus of instruction. Please refer to your EC-6 #191 Preparation Manual". In conversations with Mr. Gomez, the Program Director, it was noted that he stated that the program staff does not provide instruction in art, health, and PE because there are only a few questions on the test that cover that specific domain. South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §228.30(a).

The Educational Testing Services (ETS) test data provided by ETS was shared with Mr. Gomez. The aggregate data that was specifically addressed was the Generalist EC-6 testing data for candidates who tested utilizing the paper-based test (PBT) or the computer-administered test (CAT) for administration year 2009-2010. The minimum passing score on the overall test is a two hundred forty (240). The data revealed that for the six testing attempts on the PBT, the aggregate pass rate was two hundred twenty-eight point two (228.2) for the overall test, two hundred twenty-two point five (222.5) for Domain I (English Language Arts & Reading), two hundred thirty-five point eight (235.8) for Domain II (math), two hundred thirty-six point five (236.5) for Domain III (Social Studies), two hundred thirty-one point seven (231.7) for Domain IV (Science), and two hundred twenty-eight point five (228.5) for Domain V (Fine Arts, Health, PE). The data revealed that for the seventy (70) testing attempts on the CAT, the aggregate pass rate was two hundred twenty-seven point two (227.2) for the overall test, two hundred thirty-one point one (231.1) for Domain I (English Language Arts & Reading), two hundred twenty-eight point zero (228.0) for Domain II (math), two hundred thirty-five point five (233.5) for Domain III (Social Studies), two hundred thirty-three point three (233.3) for Domain IV (Science), and two hundred thirty-one point nine (231.9) for Domain V (Fine Arts, Health, PE). What is important to note in the presentation of these data is that the candidates who tested, in either the paper-based test or the computer-administered test, as an aggregate did not meet the passing standard on the overall test and they also did not meet the passing standard in any of the domains.

The curriculum binder provided by Mr. Gomez for the Generalist EC-6 course included the following handouts: "Literacy Stages of Development", oral reading fluency data based on the *Read Naturally* work of Hasbrouck and Tindal, and a list of websites to know. The websites listed included, but were not limited to: www.readinglady.com; www.ed.gov; www.scientificlearning.com; www.lexile.com; www.esc13.net/taks; and www.zoobooks.com. These websites are related to reading instruction and TAKS testing, however they are not

specifically designed to be an instructional tool for candidates in an educator preparation program. There were no textbooks required for the course.

A further review of the Generalist EC-6 syllabus provided information regarding course assignments, benchmarks, and grading criteria policy. Candidates are expected to participate and ask questions during class. Various assignments "...may be assigned as an assessment instrument to measure comprehension." The assignments may be oral, written, or take-home assignments that require a grade of 70 or better. Benchmarks at the end of each lecture include mini-quizzes that are 15-25 questions in length. A grade of 70 or better is required in order for the "professor to recommend the student to be uploaded for the Generalist EC-6 test." Candidates who do not score a 70 or better on the second benchmark are required to repeat the class again prior to being approved to test. An 80 question final exam is assigned once the course is completed. Candidates are required to participate in the final exam and pass with a score of 70 or better in order to be "uploaded for the exam". Candidates who fail the final exam a second time are required to repeat the class. The grading policy states that candidates "...must receive a grade of 70 or better in both daily questions and quizzes in order to receive [an] instructor's recommendation...to be uploaded."

The Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) EC-12 curriculum was also reviewed by TEA program specialists. The course curriculum was located in a binder provided by the Mr. Gomez, the program director. The course was divided into twelve (12) sections that were called competencies. Competencies I, V, and VII were specifically reviewed.

Competency I contained a two page reading overview about Piaget and cognitive development. This was followed by a quiz. The next lesson was an article about Erik Erikson and the eight (8) stages of psychosocial development followed by a quiz. A two page overview of Jerome Bruner that included the scope and application of his principles preceded a quiz. A two page reading about Vygotsky was followed by a quiz. The importance of play was presented in article format and was followed by a quiz. The first competency ended with a final exam.

Competency V, Domain II provided instruction on classroom climate. This section of the curriculum began with a true/false quiz followed by a three (3) page article about "The Collaborative Classroom". The title of the reading selection was *Enhancing Student Thinking through Collaborative Learning*. ERIC Digest. (1998) by Karen Yeok-Hwa Ngeow. This reading selection was followed by a quiz. The next reading selection was two (2) pages in length and was entitled "*How to Teach KWHL (Know, Want to Know, How will I find out, and Learned)*". This selection was followed by a quiz. "*The Supportive Classroom Environment*" reading was one page in length. It was followed by a quiz. Competency V continued with reading selections and quizzes and ended with a multiple choice final exam.

Competency VII, Domain III contained information about "Implementing Effective, Responsive Instruction & Assessment". This section provided six readings and each reading was followed by a true/false quiz. The readings provided were listed as follows: "Critical Presentation Skills-

Research to Practice”; “Using Thinking Time and Wait Time Skillfully in the Classroom (3 pages); “Classroom Questions (3 pages); “Bloom’s Taxonomy” (2 pages); and “Socratic Questioning” (2 pages). The final exam at the end of this section was a 7 question multiple choice exam.

Although the Program Director spoke with the TEA program specialists during the opening session’s “advisory committee training” when the amended Code of Ethics was presented and assured them that the new Code of Ethics was being taught to candidates in the program, it is important to note that The Educator’s Code of Ethics, revised in 2002 was located in the PPR course binder. As a result, it was unclear that the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators (TAC §247.2), amended to be effective December 26, 2010, was being taught to candidates within the program. Since the code of ethics is one of the 17 curriculum topics required to be covered in coursework taught per TAC §228.30(b), it is recommended that the program staff update the PPR coursework to include the current Code of Ethics found in TAC §247.15. South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §228.30(a).

The ETS aggregate test data that specifically addressed the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) EC-12 testing data for candidates who tested utilizing the paper-based test (PBT) or the computer-administered test (CAT) for administration year 2009-2010 was also shared with Mr. Gomez. The minimum passing score on the overall test is a two hundred forty (240). The data revealed that for the twenty-two testing attempts on the PBT, the overall average scaled score was two hundred thirty-two point two (232.2). This was below the passing standard. Additionally, Domain I: Designing instruction and assessment to promote student learning (237.5); Domain III Implementing effective responsive instruction and assessment (231.0); and Domain IV: Fulfilling professional roles and responsibilities (230.1) were all below the minimum passing score of 240. Domain II: Creating a positive classroom environment (248.2) was the only domain above the passing standard on the paper-based test. The data also revealed that for the 291 attempts on the computer-assisted test, the aggregate passing score was 238.7. While the aggregate scores for each of the four domains on the computer-based PPR EC-12 test were above the passing standard, TEA program specialists were not satisfied that the PPR EC-12 curriculum adequately covered the 17 curriculum topics per TAC §228.30(b). South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §228.30(b).

It is also recommended that the Generalist EC-6 curriculum be enhanced by including strategies for teaching content reading and content vocabulary development. When information was evaluated on how discipline-specific science reading was being addressed in the reading preparation curriculum, it was unclear if it was being adequately addressed in the program. From the review of the courses, it also was not evident how well the program is preparing its teachers to use instructional models based on recent research on how students learn. Therefore, it is recommended that the curriculum be aligned to current evidence-based approaches for instruction of K-12 students.

There is limited evidence that the educator standards are the curricular basis for all educator preparation and that, for each certificate, address the relevant Texas Essential Knowledge and

Skills (TEKS) per TAC §228.30(a). The evidence provided related to the 17 required curriculum topics being included in the curriculum for all candidates seeking initial certification per TAC §228.30(b) is grossly inadequate in the PPR EC-12 course for the certificates offered by the program. It is recommended that the program staff ensure that the educator standards are the curricular basis for all educator preparation per TAC §228.30(a). It is recommended that the program staff ensure that the Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS) for each certificate sought are addressed per TAC §228.30(a). It is recommended that the program staff ensure that the 17 topics are included in the curriculum for all candidates seeking initial certification per §228.30(b). It is recommended that the program staff ensure that reading instruction is taught in the content area instruction. South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §228.30(a).

One principal, who responded to the TEA principal questionnaire, expressed concern that candidates did not have enough practical experience in teaching lessons prior to the internship experience. It is recommended that opportunities for micro-practice of teaching the content be embedded into courses for critique by other teacher candidates and instructors. It is also recommended that the program staff explore the possibility of videotaping the micro-lessons and integrating interactive web/video technologies so that candidates may critique themselves and each other and reflect on changes in their teaching performance over time.

Finally, it is recommended that the program staff conducts an extensive curriculum review to develop and improve the alignment between all of the modules and the subject-specific educator standards related to each of the program's approved certification fields. Conducting a comprehensive curriculum review will ensure that the curriculum aligns with TEA-approved educator standards and meets the needs of all candidates. Program instructors need to be involved in the review, but it may be desirable to seek outside assistance from a curriculum specialist or another person with expertise in aligning curriculum with standards. Instructors should understand the standards, the specific curriculum units or lessons that address them, and effective methods for teaching those lessons. To adequately prepare teacher candidates, it is recommended that a curriculum analysis be conducted to develop and align the Generalist EC-6 course objectives, instructional activities, and assessments to the topics and substance (i.e., depth of knowledge) of the required TEA educator standards that candidates are to reach.

Based on evidence presented, South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP is not in compliance with TAC §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:

The South Texas Transition to Teaching educator preparation program is delivered through face-to-face onsite courses, but it also makes use of the fifty (50) surrounding school district staff development opportunities. The Program Director indicated that he sometimes allows candidates to be excused from some of the program's required courses if they are participating

in district professional development. The program appears to be allowing candidates to exceed the fifty school district hours allowed by TAC §228.35(a)(5). This issue was evident in two of the candidates' folders that were reviewed. One candidate had eighty-nine point five (89.5) hours and another had fifty-eight point twenty-five (58.25) hours. Nine of the folders reviewed had no documentation of hours. In addition, the program had no documentation for the number of school district clock hours used by each candidate. The hours chart provided for the list of candidates with last names ending in AC-BE did not have district hours recorded. South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §228.35(a)(5).

Sufficient evidence existed in the candidates' records that the teaching internship fulfilled the TAC §228.35(d)(2)(C) requirements. Internships were a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days or one academic year. The candidates' TEA electronic questionnaires provided evidence that fifty-five (55%) percent of candidates responded that they had completed more than one semester and almost an academic year of internship. However, seventy-six (76%) percent in the questionnaire indicated that "more than one semester", "almost an academic year", and "an academic year" had been completed. All thirty-eight (38) candidates responded that their teaching placement matched the grade level and certification field for which they were seeking certification.

TAC §228.35(f)(1)(2) requires that the initial contact with the assigned candidate must occur within the first three weeks of assignment. Initial contact between the candidate and the field supervisor occurred within the first three weeks of assignment as reported in the self-report. During the visit, the Director explained that first contact by the field supervisor usually occurs within the first week with some meetings held at local libraries and also during the South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP Teacher Orientation that is held by Mr. Hinojosa, a field supervisor, within the first three weeks of the school year; a copy of the agenda for that meeting was dated September 13, 2010. In the TEA intern questionnaire, eighty-two percent (82%) of candidates responded that their first contact with their field supervisor was within the first three weeks of school. The program is in compliance with TAC §228.35(f).

According to program documents completed during the visit, the total hours for an elementary and secondary certificate are 300 clock hours. In the TEA intern questionnaire, some of the interns stated that the program was inconsistent in providing information about the course and hours requirement. "They constantly change policy and they do not have anything ironclad."; "I sometimes feel like they are waiting for you to miss a deadline so that you can pay their extra fees. So they're not [very] helpful when it comes to making the students aware of their deadlines, hours needed, etc."; "Be more consistent in [their] requirements. Ex: they will tell you need a certain amount of hrs. a student completes that, yet when student asks again, they provide another set of hrs." The hours chart provided for the list of candidates with last names ending in AC-BE did not have hours recorded for each candidate. The AC-BE hours chart also did not indicate that it requires 30 hours of field experience for each candidate. Of the candidate folders reviewed, none of them contained course enrollment information on the required documentation of the 110 hours (30 hours for field-based experience plus 80 hours for coursework) prior to the internship, and only two contained documentation of the 30 clock-hours of field-based experience. Since TEA staff could not verify sufficient evidence for field experience during the visit, South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC

228.35(d)(1). It is recommended that the program maintains records in the form of time logs as a record of field experience for each candidate. South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC RULE §228.35 (a)(3) because it did not provide adequate evidence that it requires a minimum of 300 clock-hours of face-to-face contact hours of each candidate. South Texas Transition to Teaching is also not in compliance with §228.35 (a)(3)(B) because it requires less than 300 clock hours of coursework. South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with §228.35 (a)(4) because inadequate evidence was provided in each candidate's folder that all coursework and training is completed prior to educator preparation program completion and recommendation of the standard certification.

South Texas Transition to Teaching has six (6) field supervisors located at the Edinburg office. Many of the field supervisors are certified teachers with many years of public school service. Resumes for all of them were not included in the required documentation. In the questionnaire, thirty-three (33) percent of the field supervisors indicated that they had been involved in field supervision with this program for three to five years.

An agenda for the field supervisor training had a date of September 1, 2010. The invitees were listed on the agenda. The field supervisors indicated in their questionnaire that they had received the following types of training sessions in the past academic year: PDAS, TxBESS, orientation from the program, coaching techniques, and mentoring techniques. The topics on the agenda supported that the training session addressed those topics. Field supervisor materials such as the handbook for the practicum teaching experience and the observation instrument were provided at the session.

Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the interns reported in their questionnaire that the field supervisors were either effective or very effective. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the principals indicated in their questionnaire that they had received written feedback about the teaching candidates from the field supervisors. All of the field supervisors responding to their questionnaire indicated that they provided a copy of the observation form to the campus administrator. However, there was no evidence in the candidates' folders that verified that the principal received a copy of the field supervisor observation forms. It is recommended that the program establish a process for verifying delivery of the observation to the campus administrator and keep evidence of receipt of the observation form by the principals in each candidate folder. South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §228.35(f).

Thirty-six (36) percent of the responding cooperating teachers/mentors on the TEA questionnaire reported that training was provided through an orientation from South Texas Transition to Teaching. However, training could not be verified by attendance records since the program staff stated they do not provide that training. The Director stated that the principal's signature on the mentor agreement was verification that the mentors had been trained by the ESC. No documentation was kept by the program to verify that the mentors had been trained. The program staff stated that they would begin to request copies of the certificates of training from the ESC. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the cooperating teachers/mentors reported having received a handbook or manual. No cooperating/mentor teacher handbook was provided as evidence from the program. The procedures for due process and for grievances could not be located in the student or field supervisor handbooks. It is recommended that those processes be included in all handbooks. Since there was insufficient evidence of mentor/cooperating teacher training, South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §228.35(e).

From the review of the candidates' folders, three or more observations were conducted during the internship for seven of nine last-year finishers reviewed. Two of the last-year finishers did not have evidence of a minimum of three observations. For one candidate's observation forms, the length of time of the observation was not recorded and for another candidate one of the observations was less than forty-five minutes. However, there was evidence that a fourth observation was conducted for that candidate that was longer than forty-five minutes. The folders contained inconsistent documentation. TEA staff could not determine the date when candidates began their internship and whether or not the first observation had occurred in the first six weeks or if a minimum of two observations occurred in the first semester and one in the second semester. Without the start dates, it could also not be determined if late hires had completed all late hire requirements within the specified time frame. It is recommended that evidence of the start date is maintained in each candidate's records. The Program Director indicated that the program has ninety-three late hires, and that he had previously expressed concerns to TEA that they could not always meet the ninety day rule per TAC §228.35(c). It is recommended that an observation schedule form be created and used to monitor candidate start dates so that it facilitates scheduling of the first observation within the first six (6) weeks of the assignment, and a minimum of two observations during the first semester and one during the second semester. It is also recommended that the observations, including the duration, be documented for current candidates on a revised site visit log or observation form with start and end times for each observation. Also, it is recommended that the program maintains evidence of the field supervisors' interactive conference in each candidate's folder. The strength of the observation document could also be increased if it were more focused on content-knowledge and content-methodology specific to the teaching process. Because some candidate records did not have evidence of a minimum three observations and one candidate did not have observations for each year that he was on a probationary certificate, the program is not in compliance with TAC §228.35(f)(4). Because TEA staff could not determine when formal observations occurred compared to when the internship began, South Texas Transition to Teaching is also not in compliance with TAC §228.35(f)(2) and TAC §228.35(f)(3). Because there was no documentation of the interactive conference, the program is also not in compliance with TAC §228.35(f). Per the reasons cited, South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP is also not in compliance with TAC §228.35(c).

South Texas Transition to Teaching staff reported that candidates who are struggling in the program receive assistance from the field supervisor who will be the first to address the situation with a visit and conference with the mentor, administrator, and intern. If the issue continues or worsens, the Program Director is contacted and he makes a visit and observation and meets with all the parties.

Independent test preparation training sessions of only three (3) hours for the Generalist EC-6 test and for the other certification areas have been developed and delivered to ensure candidate success on the TExES tests. South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §228.35(a)(3)(C), six clock-hours of explicit test preparation that is not embedded in other coursework.

Based on the evidence presented, South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP is not in compliance with TAC §228.35 Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training.

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

Findings:

Per TAC §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”. TEA staff determined that there was sufficient evidence of benchmark assessments of candidates' progress in the Generalist EC-6 curriculum and that the program is in compliance with TAC §228.40 (a). As reported in the self-report, “benchmarks are used in different methods depending on the instructor and the amount of material covered, the feedback of students, and how well the students have done in the past in that particular content area. Some instructors benchmark prior to teaching, some embed benchmarks during the classes and still others use benchmarks as a tool to ‘self direct’ student and help them identify strengths and weaknesses. We are not limited to one methodology.” TEA staff requested and received a copy of the Generalist EC-6 benchmark exam.

The candidates' readiness to test for the content area and PPR is determined by the performance achieved on the benchmark exams and review of practice exam scores.

Per TAC §228.40(c), for the purposes of educator preparation program improvement, “an entity shall continuously evaluate the design and delivery of the educator preparation curriculum based on performance data, scientifically-based research practices, and the results of internal and external assessments.” South Texas Transition to Teaching program staff stated in the self-report that the program has a systemic plan in place to evaluate the program's design and delivery, that the overall performance is evaluated more than once every twelve months, and that all of the groups presented in the self-report are involved in curriculum and program evaluation. Copies of a course and instructor evaluation, a pre-service academy evaluation, and a program evaluation were available as samples of what the program uses. However, these documents did not provide any evidence of the evaluation of the design and delivery of the educator preparation curriculum based on performance data, scientifically-based research practices, and the results of internal and external assessments—such as data and an evaluation report. It is recommended that the collected data are compiled into evaluation reports to be used for making program decisions and provided to advisory committee members for consideration. It is also recommended that the program staff continuously evaluate the design and delivery of the educator preparation curriculum based on performance data, scientifically-based research practices, and the results of internal and external assessments. South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §228.40(c), continuous program evaluation.

Candidate records are kept in paper and electronic format for five years in a secure environment. The records are located in the South Texas Transition to Teaching administrative office. The retention of records meets the requirements of TAC §228.40(d).

Based on evidence presented, South Texas Transition to Teaching is not in compliance with TAC §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:	98%	100%	100%
Certification Areas At Risk	Science 4-8 – 0%		PPR 8-12 – 66.7%
			PPR EC-4 – 52.4%

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

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 days on compliance recommendations.

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 days.

- TAC §227.10(a)(7) Admission Criteria.
Publish admission criteria on all print and electronic materials (the website) and apply them consistently to all educator preparation candidates. This must be corrected immediately.

- TAC §227.10(4) Admission Criteria.

Do not admit candidates that do not earn the required minimum THEA scores for reading, mathematics, and writing. This must be corrected immediately.

- TAC §227.10(a)(6) Admission Criteria.

Require the criteria of either an interview or other screening instrument to determine the educator preparation candidate's appropriateness for the certification sought. This must be corrected immediately.

- TAC §228.30(a) Educator Preparation Curriculum.

Align the program's curriculum with the TEA educator standards for each Generalist EC-6 content area. This must be corrected immediately.

Prior to the next five-year monitoring visit, provide detailed syllabi for the other approved certification fields as they are reviewed and modified per report recommendations.

- TAC §228.30(a) Educator Preparation Curriculum.

Address the relevant Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in the program's curriculum for the Generalist EC-6 certificate area. This must be corrected immediately.

- TAC §228.30(b) Educator Preparation Curriculum.

Include the 17 subject matter topics in the program's curriculum for the Generalist EC-6 certificate area. Update the PPR coursework to include the current Code of Ethics found in TAC §247.15. This must be corrected immediately.

- TAC §228.35(d)(1) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Document evidence that 30 clock-hours of field-based experience is completed prior to student teaching, clinical teaching, or internship. This must be corrected immediately.

- TAC §228.35(a)(3) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Document evidence that a minimum of 300 clock-hours of coursework is provided for each candidate. This must be corrected immediately.

- TAC §228.35(a)(3)(B) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Document evidence that 80 clock hours of coursework/training is completed prior to internship. This must be corrected immediately.

- TAC §228.35(a)(3)(C) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Provide six clock hours of explicit test preparation which is not embedded in other curriculum. This must be corrected immediately.

- TAC §228.35(a)(4) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Require that all coursework and training shall be completed prior to educator preparation program completion and issuance of standard certification. This must be corrected immediately.
- TAC §228.35(a)(5) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Limit the acceptance of training that may be provided by a school district and/or campus that is an approved TEA CPE provider to 50 clock-hours. This must be corrected immediately.
- TAC §228.35(e) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Document and retain mentor and/or cooperating teacher training that relies on scientifically-based research. This must be corrected immediately.
- TAC §228.35(f)(1) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Provide a minimum of two formal observations during the first semester and one formal observation during the second semester. This must be corrected immediately.
- TAC §228.35(f)(4) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Provide a minimum of three formal observations during the practicum for candidates on second and third year probationary certificates. This must be corrected immediately.
- TAC §228.35(f)(1) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Provide the first formal observation within the first six weeks of the assignment. This must be corrected immediately.
- TAC §228.35(f)(1) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Provide written feedback of the observation through an interactive conference with the candidate. This must be corrected immediately.
- TAC §228.35(c) Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.

Require that a late hire for a teaching position shall complete 30 clock-hours of field-based experiences as well as 80 clock hours of initial training within 90 school days of assignment. This must be corrected immediately.
- TAC §228.40(c) Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

Utilize a systematic method for evaluating the design and delivery of the educator preparation curriculum based on performance data, scientifically-based research practices, and the results of internal and external assessment. This must be corrected immediately.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.

- Recruit and prepare additional members of the higher education and education service center stakeholder groups to serve on the advisory committee.
- Compile data from evaluation instruments to share at advisory committee meetings for the purpose of involving advisory committee members in decision-making, especially for those members who are not staff members of the program.
- Create and utilize a standardized format for all course syllabi.
- Align the language of TAC with program language—use the term field supervisors.
- Explore ways such as electronic portfolios so that candidates can collect artifacts to be used as evidence of their progress throughout the program.
- Develop the curriculum syllabi to make instruction of the relevant certification educator standards and the formative and summative assessment types and criteria transparent to the candidates.
- Develop and provide an advisory committee handbook to reinforce roles and responsibilities and to emphasize the importance of the committee's involvement and commitment.
- Increase advisory committee members' understanding of Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227, §228, and §229 through periodic updates so that parameters of recommendations for program improvement can be clear and measurable.
- Include subject-specific preparation for teaching reading in the content areas, such as scientific reading and scientific vocabulary development, and include theories of how students learn science in the curriculum.
- Increase the use of virtual advisory committee meetings and explore the use of conference calls, webinars, and other appropriate technology to conduct the meetings.
- Provide candidates with more opportunities to practice teaching by developing and presenting micro lessons for peers.
- Explore means of videotaping all candidates presenting micro lessons for feedback from faculty and other teaching candidates.
- Provide presentations about teachers' responsibilities for TAKS/STAAR testing from local school district testing coordinators or use the modules developed by TEA.
- Develop aligned assessments of candidates' teaching performance and analytic rubrics that provide feedback on strengths and indicate areas for continuous growth.

- Provide candidates with preparation in analyzing student work samples.