



Compliance Audit Report Summer of 2009 TeacherBuilder.com Initial Alternative Teacher Certification Program

According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c), " An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter...shall be reviewed at least once every five years under procedures approved by the Texas Education Agency (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 at www.tea.state.tx.us for details.

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County/District Number: 108-704

SBEC Approval Date:

Program Specialist staff members conducted a Texas Education Agency Compliance Desk Audit of Educator Preparation Program during the summer of 2009. The focus of the compliance audit was the initial alternative teacher certification program. The following are findings and recommendations for program improvement.

SCOPE OF THE COMPLIANCE AUDIT:

The scope of the audit was restricted solely to verifying compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227, §228, and §229.

Data Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A self-report was submitted to the Texas Education Agency via Survey Monkey along with requested verifying documents. Because student records contain confidential information and could not be transmitted to TEA, student records were checked by the program using a check list supplied by TEA. In addition, electronic questionnaires developed by TEA were sent to TeacherBuilder.com Educator Preparation Program stakeholders. Forty-five (45) stakeholders responded to the questionnaires as follows: Nine (9) advisory committee members; Three (3) Directors; One (1) program staff member (1); Zero (0) faculty/instructors; Fourteen (14) student teachers, clinical teachers, interns; Two (2) field supervisors; Ten (10) campus principals; and Six (6) cooperating

teachers/mentors responded. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence. Evidence of compliance was measured using a rubric aligned with Texas Administrative Code. After the review of the information, the program specialist arranged a telephone debrief to cover the findings of the audit. The findings were incorporated into the original survey monkey form and sent to the program. This summary report provides the findings and recommendations resulting from the audit.

COMPONENT I: Governance of Educator Preparation Programs- Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20

FINDINGS:

According to TAC rule 228.20, Governance and Educator Preparation, TeacherBuilder.com is in compliance. All categories of representation for membership are involved with the Advisory Committee. Though the Advisory Committee meets twice in the calendar year, it was not in the academic year, according to TAC rule 228.20, "shall meet a minimum of twice during each academic year". There are minutes for three of the past Advisory Committee meetings (typed minutes of 1/19/07, 5/25/07, and 10/11/08), but no minutes were submitted for 8/8/08 or 2009. Nine of the 16 Advisory Committee members returned questionnaires to TEA. The nine questionnaires report that the Advisory Committee understands their roles and responsibilities, but three indicated they did not participate in major policy decisions.

Based on the evidence presented, TeacherBuilder.com Educator Preparation Program is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

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

FINDINGS:

TeacherBuilder.com is in compliance with the Admission Requirements of TAC §227.10. According to question #39 of the self-report, candidates must have a bachelor's degree from a regional accredited university with a minimum GPA of 2.5 overall or in the last 60 semester hours, written assessment, Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT), interview, and passing of a pre-screening test. According to question #37, basic skills assessment is evaluated in a multitude of ways: THEA, SAT, ACT, and college course work. According to question #38, English proficiency is also assessed in several methods: TOEFL, English speaking university, three years of teaching in US, and interview. For English proficiency of foreign applicants only the TOEFL is accepted by TEA. Recruitment of educators is by media, job and career fairs, website, brochures and catalogs. According to the self-report, records are kept for five years, electronically and in hard copies in a secured condition. Areas of Concern: 175 interns completed the program but only 14 questionnaires were returned. As stated in the self-report, question #39, the online application has the written assessment, pre-screening tests, and interviews, but no documentation in student folders were found to substantiate this claim. Also as part of the admission requirements in question #39 of the self-report, a successful PACT is required, in reviewing test scores in the student folders, several had not passed the content test prior to admissions and several had not passed prior to placement in their internship. In the intern questionnaires, question #5 Prior to admission to your educator preparation program, did you pass the state content test for your certification? 61.5% reported that they had either not passed the test and 7.7% had not taken the test.

Based on the evidence presented, TeacherBuilder.com Educator Preparation Program is in compliance with TAC §227 - Admission Criteria.

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

FINDINGS:

Teacherbuilder.com is not in compliance with TAC §228.30. The minimum required 300 clock hours provided to the educator is not met. In reviewing the self-report, questions #63-100 request specific curriculum strategies and methods of the 17 required items. The answer given to these questions was "Modules have been created covering all required content and are updated regularly. Students are assessed on all content areas and are able to review the online modules as many times as necessary." The self-report does not adequately address the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Curriculum required by TAC §228.30. The course syllabi reviewed were only a print out of a web site major listing of domains and competencies, but no other information such as assessment methods, assignments, and grading criteria. In reviewing the online coursework, it would best be described as an online textbook. It was also noted that none indicated recent update. It is strictly narrative without illustrations, charts, graphs, video clips, taped teaching segments or links to other sites. However, there are several

embedded links to Wikipedia especially when dealing with an individual's biography (Bloom). There were assessments for each domain and a final exam (80 questions/multiple choice). Unlimited attempts are allowed, with the option of reviewing correct answers prior to the next attempt. This was an option for all assessments. Few assignments, such as projects, written response/reflections, lesson plan assignments or modeling of effective classroom management or instruction, were present in the curriculum. In the interns' electronic questionnaires, feedback about curriculum did not substantiate the information provided in the self-report. The self-report stated "Modules have been created covering all required content and are updated regularly." Of the 91 intern surveys sent out only 14 were returned. Intern questionnaires revealed the following: questions #14 - reading strategies; 36.4 % - no and 9.1% - I do not know; question #20 TEKS organization, structure, and skill; 27.3% - no and 27.3% - I do not know; question #21 TEKS in content areas; 27.3% - no and 18.2% - I do not know; question #22 responsibility for administering the TAKS exam; 30%- no and 20% - I do not know; question #23 curriculum development; 30% - no and 20% - I do not know; question #24 develop a lesson plan; 30% - no and 20% - I do not know; question #25 utilize variety of classroom assessments; 27.3% no and 27.3% - I do not know; question #26 formal assessments to diagnose learning needs; 36.4% - no and 36.4% - I do not know; question #28 law and standard regarding special education needs; 27.3% - no and 27.3% - I do not know; question #29 gifted and talented; 36.4% - no and 27.3% - I do not know; question #30 limited English proficiency; 36.4% - no and 36.4% - I do not know; question # 31 parent conferences; 45.5% - no and 27.3% - I do not know; question #32 variety of instructional strategies; 36.4% - no and 18.2% - I do not know; question #33 differentiated instruction; 45.5% - no and 18.2% - I do not know; question #34 instructional technology; 45.5% - no and 18.2% - I do not know. There were two sets of flash cards that the candidate could use to study for the test. The purpose of the PPR portion of the educator preparation program is to take people who have content knowledge and teach them how to transfer their knowledge effectively to students. In looking at the results of the feedback from the interns and reviewing the online curriculum, there is reasonable doubt that this has been accomplished. It appears that the curriculum is weak or non-existent for some topics.

Based on evidence presented, TeacherBuilder.com Educator Preparation Program is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum.

COMPONENT IV: Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training (TAC) §228.35

FINDINGS:

TeacherBuilder.com is not in compliance with TAC 228.35. There is a shortage in the total number of hours in the program which according to rule is 300 clock hours. There is also a question about the execution of the 30 hour field-based experiences. The lack of documentation in student files and document review materials made it impossible to substantiate the responses in the self-report. Questions #108-113 on the self-report addresses the field experience (30 clock hours), specifically in question #113 how the field experience was documented. The response in the self-report was "Students are required to maintain an observation log signed by the teacher and must also complete an observation form for each field-based experience." No log or other documentation was found in the student folders. In intern question # 49, interns were asked if they completed 30 or more clock hours of field based experiences prior to internship; 40% - no and 10% - I do not know. Intern question #53 asks if video or electronic

media was used; 80% - no. In the self-report, question #111 states was 15 clock hours of field experience is video or electronic media was provided. No documentation of any field experiences was found in the student folders. The self-report (question #115) indicates that the program accepts up to 50 hours of professional development by the districts for the interns. However, the document review revealed no documentation to substantiate this claim. From the 14 interns' surveys, over 64% reported either the program did not accept such training or that the intern did not know. Self-report question #117 asks number of training hours; answer given was 300 clock hours. In reviewing the online curriculum and documentation that claim could not be substantiated. Mentor training is done online with TxBESS curriculum. Question #129 of the self-report states that first contact with the intern takes place within the first three weeks of the assignment. Intern questionnaires reveal in question # 71, addressing the same question revealed 62.5% - no. Intern question #72, asked if the first formal observation within 6 weeks of assignment, 66.7% - no. In the self-report question #130, asking if three formal observation during the teaching assignment, answer yes. In the intern questionnaire question #73, only 33% said yes. There was not enough documentation the student folders to substantiate this claim. Observation documentation was not complete due to missing observation forms and in some cases contained only the district PDAS evaluations. There appeared to be no program orientation on how to proceed through the program. The chat that was available among students consisted mainly of asking other students what to do. Area of concern: Statements in the self-report were not confirmed by the responses of the intern questionnaires. There was not enough documentation to substantiate statements given in the self-report.

Based on evidence presented, TeacherBuilder.com Educator Preparation Program is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.35 – Program Delivery and On-Going Support.

COMPONENT V: Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement – Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40

FINDINGS:

TeacherBuilder is not in compliance with TAC 228.40. There was no documentation of evaluation instruments or other materials in the document review. In the document review folder #12, titled Program Evaluation Documents there were only the ASEP test results. In the Advisory Committee questionnaire question #2, types of data your program uses for self evaluation, the highest items chosen (scores of 8 or 9, out of 9) were qualitative evaluations from students, student retention information, number of students passing the TExES on the first attempt, and number of tests attempted by each student. Of the items listed in the Advisory Committee question, only qualitative evaluations from student requested feedback was identified but no documentation was provided. No program evaluations from principals, mentors, or others are requested for feedback and evaluation.

Based on evidence presented, TeacherBuilder.com Educator Preparation Program is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Compliance Recommendations are based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency compliance audit. If the program is out of compliance with any component, please consult the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. General Recommendations are suggestions for program improvement only.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: In order to meet requirements of Texas Administrative Code governing educator preparation programs, the following recommendations must be implemented immediately:

- According to TAC rule 227.10 (6), "an application and either an interview or other screening instrument is required to determine the educator preparation candidate's appropriateness for the certification sought." Therefore student folders should contain all materials required for admission: interview record, written assessment, passing score on the screening instrument, screening instrument, and letters of recommendation. Full documentation should be placed in student folders. Implement immediately.
- According to TAC 228.35 (a) (3), "an educator preparation program shall provide each candidate with a minimum of 300 clock-hours of coursework and/or training." In reviewing the online coursework and document review, it was determined that TeacherBuilder.com did not meet the required clock-hours. The additional clock hours of coursework should be created. Implement immediately.

OTHER PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) If the PACT is required for admissions, the documentation should align with that admission criterion. Each student folder should have successful results of the PACT in their folder to substantiate that admission requirement. It is recommended that the record of the test be placed in the student folder beginning immediately or withdraw the PACT as an admission criterion;

(2) The program needs to keep documentation in student folders of any professional development that interns attend at the school or district level. They also need to keep documentation of students field based experiences in the student folders;

(3) Orientation sessions need to be provided for incoming students; and

(4) The program needs to improve communication with interns and completers in order to more accurately track students in the coming years with the implementation of the expected revision of TAC 229 Accountability System for Educator Preparation Programs.