



## Compliance Audit Report Texas A&M University--Kingsville Principal 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 rules at [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us) for details.

**Contact Information:** Dr. Alberto Ruiz, Dean

**County/District Number:** 137501

**TEA Approval Date:**

A compliance audit visit for the principal certification program at Texas A&M University--Kingsville, Kingsville, Texas, was conducted on January 24-26, 2012, by Texas Education Agency (TEA) Program Specialist, Dr. Mary S. Black, and Manager of Educator Preparation, Ms. Sandra Jo Nix, in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §229.6 (a).

### **Data Collection and Analysis:**

The audit used information from a self-report submitted by Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK), a review of documents, syllabi, curriculum correlation charts, and responses from electronic questionnaires as evidence of compliance with TAC. A total of 29 responses to the electronic questionnaires were received by TEA: six (of 20) from advisory committee members; none (of four) from field supervisors; 11 (of 25) from principal candidates; and 12 (of 25) from candidate mentors. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation were used to evaluate the evidence. Evidence of compliance was measured using a rubric correlated to TAC.

### **Opening and Closing Sessions:**

An Opening Session was held the morning of January 24, 2012. The meeting was attended by 19 stakeholders, including Dr. Alberto Ruiz, Dean of the College of Education and Human Performance at TAMUK; Dr. Glenda Holland, Chair of Educational Administration; and Dr. Ronald McKenzie, Coordinator of the Principal Certification Program. Dr. Mary S. Black presented advisory committee training and reviewed audit procedures and responses from

electronic questionnaires. Dr. Black also presented a summary of audit findings at a Closing Session to Drs. Ruiz, Holland, and McKenzie on January 26, 2012.

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

### **FINDINGS:**

Program support was indicated by the governing body of Texas A&M University - Kingsville per TAC §228.20(c) as evidenced by the participation of Drs. Ruiz, Holland, and McKenzie in various aspects of the compliance audit.

The advisory committee for the TAMUK educator preparation program, including principal certification, has 24 members, including eight representing local schools, four representing the community; one representing a regional education service center, and ten from institutions of higher education. The advisory committee meets the composition requirements of TAC §228.20(b).

An advisory committee meeting was held on January 25<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the TEA compliance audit. An agenda and a sign-in sheet will document the meeting. Documents were also reviewed for three previous meetings: January 12, 2012 (14 members attended); October 26, 2011 (8 members attended); and April 8, 2010. The principal certification program was discussed at the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. No minutes were available for the October 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, and no sign-in sheets were available for the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. The meetings on January 12, 2012, and October 26, 2011, demonstrate compliance of meeting at least twice each academic year as per TAC §228.20(b). Minutes of the January 12<sup>th</sup> advisory committee meeting confirmed discussion of field-based experiences as required by TAC §228.35(d).

A packet of material explaining the roles and responsibilities of the advisory committee members was presented in the document review. However, there seemed to be confusion in the members' responses on their questionnaires. Evidence presented in the minutes of the advisory committee meetings confirmed that the members participate in the design, delivery, policy decisions, and program evaluation [TAC 228.20(b)].

**Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University-Kingsville is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.**

## **COMPONENT II: ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10 and TAC §241 – Admission and Certification Criteria**

### **FINDINGS:**

There are currently 168 candidates enrolled in the principal certification program at TAMUK. The TAMUK principal certification program requires a 2.6 GPA for admission, above the state-mandated 2.5 [TAC §227.10(A)]. A review of unofficial transcripts from the Graduate Studies office showed evidence that at least six candidates were admitted with GPAs lower than 2.6, or had no GPA records at all. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or the Miller Analogy Test (MAT)

is required as a screening device for candidate appropriateness for the principal certification [TAC §227.10(6)]. No personal interview is conducted with prospective candidates. No out-of-country candidates are currently enrolled in this program, but procedures exist for appropriate transcript review [TAC §227.10(7)(e)] and TOEFL testing [TAC §227.10(6)].

Admission criteria are available publically on the university website and in the Texas A&M University-Kingsville catalog. In addition, the program advertises its program through fliers and billboards [TAC §227.10].

A review of 22 candidates' records found all submitted applications [TAC §227.10(6)] and transcripts showing a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university [TAC §227.10(c)]. Candidates must graduate and receive their master's degree before TAMUK recommends them for the standard principal certificate. In addition, a standard teaching certificate and two creditable years of teaching experiences are required prior to recommendation for principal certification.

Because entering GPAs were not recorded for all candidates for principal certification, TAMUK is not in compliance in meeting admissions criteria.

**Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University-Kingsville is not in compliance with TAC §227 and §241 - ADMISSION CRITERIA.**

### **COMPONENT III: CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §241 – Principal Preparation Curriculum**

#### **FINDINGS:**

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §241.15(a) states that the curricula standards for the principal certificate must emphasize: learner-centered value & ethics of leadership; learner-centered leadership and campus culture; learner-centered human resources leadership & management; learner-centered communications and community relations; learner-centered organizational leadership and management; learner-centered curriculum planning and development; learner-centered instructional leadership and management.

In fall 2010, TAMUK redesigned the principal certification program to align more closely with state standards. The number of required courses was reduced and a new course EDAD 5343 Managing School Resources was added. As presented by the Dr. Glenda Holland, Chair of the Department, during the Opening Session, 90 additional hours of competency-based field experience are being phased into coursework.

The coursework is delivered through the following courses: EDAD 5301 - Foundations of Education; EDAD 5302 - Elementary and Secondary Curriculum; EDAD 5305 - Graduate Research Project II; EDAD 5341- School Administration; EDAD 5343 - Managing School Resources; EDAD 5344 - Supervision; EDAD 5345 - Graduate Research II; EDAD 5382 - School Public Relations; and EDED 5329 - Educational Research I.

According to the self-report, an advanced degree is required of faculty members who deliver instruction in the principal preparation program. A review of faculty vitae verified that the curriculum has appropriate credentials. However, only two of the instructors' vitas reflected previous experience as principals.

The online program was created using standards developed by the university, which appear to meet standards set by the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL). All instructors were trained in the online system by the university instructional technology staff

To ensure that the principal certification program at TAMUK meets the curriculum requirements outlined in TAC §241.15, the program presented online course syllabi and correlation charts showing the relationship of the principal standards, domains and competencies to their coursework. According to these documents, it appears that sufficient evidence exists that the standards and competencies are the basis for the curricula and coursework for the principal preparation program. However, verifying correlation of the TAMUK coursework to the content provided online could not be completed because no actual content is presented online. The main delivery of the course content in the program is through the textbooks.

The online TAMUK principal program has existed for about two years. The principal program is delivered totally via Blackboard, the university course management system (CMS), with the exception of the practicum. TEA reviewed several of the online courses to determine the structure and content of the courses. The majority of the information housed within the online courses was organizational in nature. Syllabi and assignments were posted, as well as required textbooks. According to the self-report, all syllabi contain instructor contact information, course/module content description, goals, objectives, Texas standards and competencies, focused reading assignments, classroom policies, and assignments. These items were included in most syllabi. It appears the format for each course is to have the candidates read the chapters from the textbook and either prepare a PowerPoint presentation over the chapter's content, respond to questions, or complete a case study. A few courses offered commercially prepared PowerPoint presentations that accompanied the textbook or links to various websites for pertinent information for the course, such as in school finance. No video lectures or other content specific information or enrichment related to the coursework was presented online by the instructors.

Interaction with students is via chat sessions. In reviewing one chat session, it appeared that the content of the chat was more social in nature than content driven. There was no in depth questioning by the instructor to elicit discussion involving higher order thinking skills by the candidates. According to the self-report, candidates' are assessed via quiz/tests, candidate-written reports, reactions to case studies/hypothetical campus situations and projects. Rubrics were identified as being used to evaluate several of the items. A grade book was present in BlackBoard for candidates to review. However, in review of the coursework, no tests were available for viewing. A paper was found in the candidates' portfolios having to do with a community service project.

**Based on evidence presented, Texas A&M University-Kingsville is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §241.15 – STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR THE PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATE.**

**COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT - Texas  
Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – Preparation Program Coursework and/or  
Training and §241Principal Certificate**

**FINDINGS:**

In order to receive the principal certification and required master's degree at TAMUK, candidates must complete a total of 36 semester hours or 1485 clock hours of coursework and training, which exceeds the state mandate of a minimum of 200 clock hours [TAC 228.35(b)]. The practicum for principals at TAMUK is 160 clock hours, as required by TAC §228.35(d)(3) and TAC §241.10(b).

Candidates receive mentoring by a campus administrator [TAC 228.35(e)] and field supervision from the university [228.35(f)]. Lists of principal candidates and their assigned mentors and field supervisors were present for review.

According to the self-report submitted by TAMUK, training for principal mentors was not provided. However, during the visit, it was stated that the field supervisors train the principal mentors individually. A PowerPoint has been developed for online mentor training to be used in the future [TAC§ 228.35(e)]. The self-report also indicated that school districts provided training for mentors, but no documentation was presented to substantiate the training. Field supervisors are trained via a handbook and group meetings [228.35(f)].

According to the self-report, initial contact with the candidate is made by the field supervisor within the first three weeks of the practicum and is documented by forms signed by the candidates and the field supervisor [TAC §228.35(f)]. A review of 18 candidates' records found that these forms were not always signed and dated. Three formal observations of the candidates were made by the field supervisors and documented with signed observation forms [TAC §228.35(f)]. Records of formal observations were found for all 18 candidates, but not all of these were signed and dated. Observation records generally indicated that observations were a minimum of 45 minutes in duration, as required by TAC §228.35(f), but the times were omitted on some forms. A revised observation form was reviewed by TEA that adds space for time-in/time-out, and a candidate's signature.

A review of the logs and practicum journals of 18 candidates found that six had inadequate experiences during the principal practicum which does not comply with TAC §241.10 (b) which mandates that a principal candidate must demonstrate proficiency in each of the principal standards during the practicum. For example, one candidate indicated that his experience consisted mainly of attending football, volleyball and basketball games. While that is indeed a duty of school principals, the practicum should contain a variety of administrative functions. Another candidate indicated that he served 112 hours (of 160) on lunch or morning duty, observing students as they enter the building or eat lunch. Another journal entry consisted of "shadowed principal" for each entry. Another primarily consisted of phone calls and emails to her TAMUK advisor and seeking donations for Family Fun Night at the school. Page 6 of the Principal Internship Handbook produced by TAMUK for 2011-2012 lists 20 examples of leadership activities recommended during the practicum. None of the activities mentioned above are on that list. Because of inconsistent documentation and practica activities that do not meet standards set for principal candidates, TAMUK is out of compliance in Component IV.

**Based on evidence presented, Texas A&M University-Kingsville is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.35 – PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ON-GOING SUPPORT and Texas Administrative Code §241 PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATE**

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

**FINDINGS:**

Texas A&M University-Kingsville ensures that candidates are prepared to receive the standard principal certificate by requiring success on designated benchmarks and assessments for candidates. Candidates must successfully complete all required courses and the practicum prior to graduation. Both graduation with a master’s degree and a passing score on the TExES certification exam are required by the university in order to be recommended for the standard principal certificate [TAC §228.40(a)]. Candidate’s readiness to test is determined by six hours of test preparation given on Saturdays and practice on newly-acquired practice exams [TAC §228.40(b)].

The principal program is evaluated on an ongoing basis by both the College of Education and Human Performance and the university as a whole. The required five-year review of the master’s level principal program by the university will occur this spring. Candidate evaluations of courses and test results are two primary pieces of evaluation data used internally. Advisory committee minutes documented that both candidate and overall program evaluation are discussed [TAC §228.40(c)].

Candidate records are maintained for five years or more by the registrar’s office, Office of Graduate Studies, and the College of Education and Human Performance in a secure environment as required by Texas Administrative Code §228.20(d).

**Based on evidence presented, Texas A&M University-Kingsville is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.40 – ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.**

**COMPONENT VI: Professional Conduct (TAC) §228.50**

TAC §228.50(a) states that during the period of preparation, the educator preparation entity shall ensure that the individuals preparing candidates and the candidates themselves demonstrate adherence to Chapter 247 of this title (relating to Educators’ Code of Ethics).

**Senate Bill 174/Texas Administrative Code §229**

**Current Accreditation Status**

Texas A&M University—Kingsville is currently rated “Accredited”

## Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

Pass Rate Performance:	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
	Final 80% Standard	70% Standard	75% Pass Rate
Overall:	93%	90%	95%
Principal Exam Only	80%	90%	90%

## 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) rules and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. General Recommendations are suggestions for program improvement only. Failure to comply with TAC rules governing educator preparation programs may result in action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) per TAC 229 enacted in 2010.

**PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:** In order to meet requirements of all Texas Administrative Code rule governing educator preparation programs, the following must be corrected immediately:

Texas Administrative Code §227.10 – Admission Requirements

- Maintain documentation of entering GPAs for all candidates in the College of Education and Human Performance.

Texas Administrative Code §228.35 and Texas Administrative Code §241

- Implement a revised candidate observation form which includes space to record the start time and end time of the observation and a place for the candidate to sign to acknowledge the observation and feedback conference;
- Ensure that all observation forms are signed and dated by field supervisors;
- Ensure that all practica activities meet standards for the principal certificate;
- Train all principal mentors in the expectations of the program and general mentoring techniques for professionals.

## GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

Component I:

- Maintain minutes, agendas, and sign-in sheets for each advisory committee meeting for up to five years;
- Add additional advisory committee members representing mentors and candidates in the various other programs in order gain their perspectives;

- Consider creative ways to hold advisory committee meetings such as webinars, telephone conferences in order to increase participation;
- Discuss all educational programs leading to licensure with the advisory committee each year.

#### Component II:

- Add a personal interview as a screening device for candidates seeking principal certification using a rubric for scoring. The interviews can be conducted using the telephone or Skype.

#### Component III:

- Use the seven standards and their associated competencies per TAC §241.15 as the foundation for the Principal Preparation Program's curriculum to ensure not only breadth, but depth of the standards and rigor within the curriculum.
- Expand the role of the instructor in providing online instruction;
- Expand the capabilities of instructional delivery in the online framework.
- As staff positions become available, seek individuals who have experience as a principal to add depth of knowledge and practical applications to instruction.

#### Component IV:

- Ensure that each candidate receives a minimum of three observations during the practicum, including any candidates that may be on probationary certificates for up to three years;
- Document that all candidates are offered a minimum of six clock hours of test preparation for the TEXES;
- Add a place on the observation form that allows for the start and stop time of the interactive conference to be recorded;
- Have all candidates sign a FERPA release that allows the program to provide observation information to the mentor and school district;
- Monitor practicum logs on a monthly basis in order to ensure appropriateness of activities;
- Add a place on the observation form for the principal/mentor of the candidate to initial or sign to verify receipt of observation form. A secretary or other designated person can initial in place of the principal;
- Consider adding at the top of the observation form a place to circle as 1<sup>st</sup> contact, first observation, 2<sup>nd</sup> observation, 3<sup>rd</sup> observation, etc. The field supervisor would circle which was appropriate for the visit;
- Keep a record of all informal coaching and observations provided to a candidate.

#### Component V:

- Seek testing modifications through ETS for students who have disabilities such as dyslexia, etc.