



Compliance Audit Report 2010-2011 Weatherford College

According to TAC §228.10(c) An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter...shall be reviewed at least once every five years under procedures approved by the TEA staff; however, a review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the TEA staff. Per TAC §228.1(c) all educator preparation programs are subject to the same standards of accountability, as required under Chapter 229 of this title. The Texas Education Agency administers Texas Administrative Code rules required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all educator preparation programs in the state. Please see the complete Texas Administrative Code rules at www.tea.state.tx.us for details contained in each rule.

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Texas Education Agency (TEA) program specialists, Dr. Mary S. Black and Dr. Phillip Eaglin, conducted a compliance audit on January 25-26, 2011. The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date Self-Report Submitted: December 17, 2010

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code rules 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 surveys were sent to Weatherford College participants by TEA. A total of 40 responses to the surveys were received by TEA, including from seven from interns, two from field supervisors, nine from school principals, nine from campus mentors, and 13 from other advisory committee members. A self-report was submitted to TEA by Weatherford College on December 17, 2010. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation were used to evaluate the evidence.

The Opening Session January 25, 2011 was attended by 15 people, including Dr. Don Tomas, vice-president for instruction; Rhonda Torres, dean of education and instructional support; and Dr. Joyce Melton Pages, director of alternative certification. Eleven people attended the Closing Session on January 26, 2011.

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

Findings:

The advisory committee currently has 30 members: 15 members representing local schools and districts, seven from higher education (Weatherford College), six from business and community

interests, and one the Regional Education Service Center. The roles and responsibilities for the advisory committee are clearly delineated, according to the self-report, electronic questionnaires, and discussion during the Opening Session. Of the sixteen advisory committee members who returned the electronic questionnaire to TEA, 13 responded that they were familiar with TAC §227, §228, and §229. Twelve indicated that the advisory committee participates in designing or revising the curriculum for the program and in making major policy decisions. One of the major policy decisions the advisory committee revisits from time to time is the decision to keep the program small, admitting only about 25 candidates at a time. According to Dr. Pages the director, this will help the program maintain quality by not over-extending. All 13 members of the advisory committee responded that they participated in overall program evaluation. When asked whether the advisory committee reviews field-based experiences, the respondents were split, six responding positively and seven responding negatively. Eleven members indicated that the committee evaluates data for the program every 12 months in order to plan improvement.

Minutes showed the involvement of the advisory committee in the design, delivery, evaluation and policy decisions for the program through participating in discussion, planning, and offering feedback. Minutes, agendas and sign-in sheets from two meetings per year from 2011 to 2005 were available during the document review. Meetings for the current academic year were held September 21, 2010, December 14, 2010, and April 19, 2011. TEA program specialists presented brief advisory committee training regarding Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 228 and 229 at the Opening Session.

Based on the evidence presented above, Weatherford College alternate certification program is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS.

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

Findings:

Weatherford College uses the state mandated requirements for admission to an educator certification program, including the following: baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited university; 2.5 GPA or at least a 2.5 on the last 60 semester hours; successful basic skills exams or exemptions; and a minimum of 12 semester hours in subject-specific content for the certification sought. Official transcripts were kept in student files, along with a GPA calculation form. The application form also includes a checklist for the steps in the application process. The Gallup Teacher Insight interview is utilized along with the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Test to screen applicants, fulfilling TAC§ 227.10 (6). These instruments are also in student folders. As a matter of policy, out-of-country applicants must have the required transcript evaluation and pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam, although no foreign students have been admitted. Admissions criteria are published on the college website and in brochures.

No students have been admitted with GPAs lower than 2.5, and those applying to enter Career and Technology Education meet the criteria for that certificate.

Twenty-six new candidates were admitted to the program during the past academic year, making a total of 72 candidates enrolled as “finishers”, “all but clinical,” and “other enrolled.” Eleven candidates are enrolled as interns or clinical teachers for this academic year. Some candidates are accepted who have passed the Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) for their particular area of certification, and others must pass the TExES content exam after enrolling in the program. On the electronic questionnaires received at TEA from Weatherford College candidates, three of the seven who responded has passed the PACT, three did not take the PACT, and one took the PACT, but failed. Candidates who had not passed PACT receive content preparation from the program prior to testing.

Based on the evidence presented above, Weatherford College is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10 – Admission Criteria.

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

Findings:

Three charts showing alignment of standards and TEKS to curriculum modules and activities were prepared by Weatherford College and reviewed by TEA program specialists during the document review. All required standards and TEKS were shown to be present in the Weatherford College curriculum. The charts document the standards alignment for Generalist 4-8, TEKS for Generalist 4-8, and the 17 mandated topics in Texas Administrative Code §228.30. Weatherford College does not offer the Generalist EC-6 certificate, but concentrates on middle grades and high school.

Seven candidates responded to electronic questionnaires from TEA. All seven reported receiving instruction in special education laws and standards, and five reported instruction in strategies for gifted and talented students, and strategies for English language learners. It is likely that the other two respondents had not yet received this instruction because they were at an earlier stage of the program.

Syllabi for each content area in which candidates are currently seeking certification was reviewed during the document review. Online courses for special education law, general school law and career and technology education methodology were also reviewed by TEA program specialists. Domains and competencies were listed on the syllabus for each subject area. The online portion includes readings, assignments, required discussion forums and response topics. All assignments are graded by the instructors. Course grades are tracked in Excel by the director. Three eight-hour meetings on Saturdays during the internship concern classroom management. Candidates must also respond to online forum topics about classroom management during the internship, as well as topics concerning adaptation and modifications for special education students, and the rigor and relevance of classroom assessments.

One of the highlights of the Weatherford College program is the 40 clock hours of required training in instructional technology. The instructional technology course includes training in Google.docs, moodle, polling, itune educational videos, blogging, podcasting and other emerging media.

Based on the evidence presented above, Weatherford College is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (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:

A program hours chart prepared by the program director confirms that the program offers 311 clock hours of coursework and training in addition to internship or clinical teaching. Courses and training required prior to internship or clinical teaching include 40 clock hours in the selected content area, 40 clock hours of instructional technology, and 30 hours of field-based observation and experience. Candidates submit responses to specific questions concerning their field-based observations. Logs are also signed by the classroom teacher being observed. No video is allowed for field-based observation except in the case of late-hires. Nine hours of test preparation are also offered. Weatherford College does not accept any training provided by school districts towards the required 300 clock hours mandated by the state for educator preparation.

Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities are offered in a hybrid format with 45 clock hours face-to-face and 45 clock hours online. The online portion includes readings, assignments, required discussion forums and response topics. All assignments are graded by the instructors.

Course grades are tracked in Excel by the director. Three eight-hour meetings on Saturdays during the internship concern classroom management. Candidates must also respond to online forum topics about classroom management during the internship, as well as topics concerning adaptation and modifications for special education students, and the rigor and relevance of classroom assessments.

Mentor handbooks and letters of commitment were reviewed by TEA program specialists. The two field supervisors for the program have worked in this capacity for five and seven years, respectively. A handbook for field supervisors was available, and discussion with them highlighted their commitment and excitement about the job. All field supervisors are certified Texas teachers with over 20 years classroom experience. They have been trained in TxBESS and receive refresher training as needed. All seven candidates who responded to electronic questionnaires from TEA indicated that field supervisors made contact with the candidates within the first three weeks of internship or clinical teaching. Field supervisors document each visit by putting a copy of the school identification badge, with date and time, in the student files. Observation forms did not contain a start and finish time, but each had detailed comments for all

domains. Discussion with the two field supervisors verified that observations were a minimum of 45 minutes long, as did the self-report. All seven candidates who responded to questionnaires indicated that field supervisors had given them both verbal and written feedback from observations. Copies of the forms are left in the campus administrator's mailbox or with the secretary after each observation. These forms were found in student files during the review.

Six candidates also indicated in the questionnaires that field supervisors had provided them with additional coaching and other informal observation, above what is required in TAC rule.

Based on the evidence presented above, Weatherford College is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (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:

Benchmarks for candidates are clearly delineated for each course, online component, and the internship or clinical teaching experience. Benchmarks for content courses include: 1) a score of 80% or more on a lesson plan assignment; and 2) a score of 80% or better on a classroom management plan assignment. For the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities course, the following benchmarks are required: 1) submission of an observation log and journal; 2) a mid-term exam with a minimum score of 80%; 3) another lesson plan with a score of 80% or better; 4) a demonstration lesson with a minimum score of 80%; and 5) and the first part of a portfolio. For the Intel technology course, candidates must make at least 80% on a project. For the online component during internship, students must complete an assessment project, and all online forums. During the internship, candidates are required to complete the portfolio and obtain the approval of the field supervisor, mentor and campus principal for standard certification.

Courses have a variety of graded assessments that determine candidate progress. In addition to satisfactory completion of all benchmarks, candidates take a practice test before the TExES content or PPR exams. A checklist, kept both electronically and on paper, tracks candidate progress and grades.

Advisory committee minutes reveal annual evaluation of the curriculum and overall program effectiveness. A variety of data is reviewed concerning the program, including course and instructor surveys, candidate evaluations, testing data, and recommendations from advisory committee members. Testing pass rates for Weatherford College for 2010 are 100 percent for all categories.

A review of candidate files showed that required documents are retained for at least five years.

Based on the evidence presented above, Weatherford College is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 – ASSESSMENT AND

EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

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.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.

1. Add time in/time out to candidate evaluation forms for the field supervisors.