



Compliance Report
for
Yes Prep Alternative Certification Program
Houston, Texas
February 11, 2010

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.

A one-year compliance audit of the Yes Prep Alternative Certification Program was conducted by Texas Education Agency program specialists Dr. Mary S. Black and Annabel Peña on February 11, 2010. Yes Prep was approved to offer alternative teacher certification by the State Board for Educator Certification on February 6, 2009. Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code rules governing educator preparation programs was collected by qualitative means. Electronic surveys were sent to five program faculty, three staff, 83 interns, 17 field supervisors, seven Advisory Committee members, 20 mentors, and 16 principals or school directors. Forty-nine surveys were completed and submitted to TEA from three Advisory Committee members, three from program staff, eight from field supervisors, 21 from interns, 11 from mentors, four from principals or school directors, and none from faculty. Some faculty also serve as field supervisors and only returned one survey. A qualitative review of documents, syllabi, and student folders also provided evidence regarding compliance. Yes Prep submitted a one-year self-report to TEA on January 23, 2010. In addition, the program specialists informally interviewed program staff.

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

Findings:

Yes Prep Teaching Excellence Program (Yes Prep) is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 228.20 pertaining to governance or the Advisory Committee (AC) for the teacher preparation program. According to electronic surveys and the self-report, the Advisory Committee is composed of people representing public or private schools, institutions of higher education, and business and community. A review of documents revealed that the Advisory Committee holds a minimum of two meetings per academic year, and keeps

minutes and agendas. The AC is engaged in all aspects of the teacher certification program, including design, delivery, and evaluation. For example at the meeting of November 3, 2009, the agenda includes a review of induction data and mid-semester survey data. The mid-semester data had four strategic goals: 1) for interns teaching TAKS subjects, 80% of their students will score at the college readiness level (2200) or higher; 2) Yes Prep will retain 90% of the interns for the following five+ years; 3) 75% of the interns will agree or strongly agree that the development provided by the program improved their effectiveness as a teacher, and 4) 90% of the interns will agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with their Instructional Coach (Field Supervisor) and the program overall. The document review also demonstrated that data presented to the Advisory Committee from the mid-semester survey showed that the program was achieving these four goals.

Based on the evidence presented above, Yes Prep is in compliance with TAC 228.20.

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

Findings:

Yes Prep is in compliance with TAC 227.10 concerning Admissions Criteria for educator certification programs. The program has higher standards for admission than mandated by the state. The program requires a GPA of 2.8, with preference given to GPAs of 3.0 or above for entry. Application cover letters must demonstrate understanding of the Yes Prep mission, the ability to communicate professionally, and show a record of past achievement. Potential candidates also undergo a structured, rated interview and must write several short essays which are also rated. In a review of student folders, rubrics scoring admission factors for each student revealed consistency in how admission criteria are employed.

The program has “a Talent Strategy Team” to attract, acquire and successfully hire new interns for the 13 Yes Prep charter schools in Houston. Their written philosophy seen in the document review states that Yes Prep sees “the process of recruitment, selection, acquisition, training, and retention as one long continuum that is maximized through a commitment to communication and processes.” Yes Prep recruits primarily at Texas A & M, the University of Texas at Austin and Rice University. Out of Texas they recruit at Stanford, Harvard, Columbia, Michigan, Lewis & Clark, Vanderbilt, and the University of Virginia. They use such marketing tools as Facebook and blogging, and also work closely with Teach for America.

In 2009-2010, Yes Prep had 1,200 applications for 92 teaching positions, according to documents provided by the Talent Strategy team. Of the people hired for these positions, 75 are enrolled in the ACP.

Based on the evidence presented above, Yes Prep is in compliance with TAC 227.10.

Commendations: Yes Prep requires higher admission standards than mandated by the state and consistently recruits at highly selective universities. This has resulted in a large pool of highly qualified applicants for the program.

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

Findings:

Yes Prep is in compliance with TAC 228.30 concerning the required curriculum for educator preparation. Each module is connected to the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) standards and competencies, as evidenced in the document review of course syllabi. Additional topics not required in TAC rule are also taught, including “Data-driven conversations,” “Intro into objective tracking,” and “Objective-driven tutorials.” Examining and analyzing data is also emphasized in the module on Special Populations. A variety of instructional strategies are taught including discovery-based learning, strategies for guided practice and group work, and questioning strategies.

The program has created short videos of their own teachers and classrooms to illustrate each standard in the PPR. These are shown to interns within appropriate modules as examples of teacher behaviors to emulate. Program Specialists saw examples of these during conversation with the program director.

Exit tickets are required at the end of each module to demonstrate learning by the candidate. The Field Supervisors (Instructional Coaches) then give immediate feedback about the candidate’s mastery of module objectives. Candidates are also required to submit deliverables in the form of lesson plans after each module. Once again, the Field Supervisors (Instructional Coaches) provide immediate feedback on the lessons, and then when possible, observe the intern actually teaching the lesson. Exit tickets and deliverables were found in student folders and examples were provided for the document review.

During this first year of operation, Yes Prep has provided preparation for TExES content exams. Extensive study guides have been created by content/instructional specialists for each certification field and level offered. For example in the study guide for Generalist 4-8 Math, as seen in the document

review, the focus is on competencies and important vocabulary review. Each term or concept is tied to a particular competency for the TExES exam. Definitions for each term or concept are given, often using graphs, diagrams or formulae. Interns must identify each the competencies they are confident about, could use additional support in, or need a good deal of support in. The identified support is then provided by the Field Supervisor (Instructional Coach) or other specialist. In 2010-11, Yes Prep intends to require all candidates to pass the PACT before entering the program.

Based on the evidence presented above, Yes Prep is in compliance with TAC 228.30.

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

Findings:

Yes Prep is in compliance with TAC 228.25 regarding required program delivery and ongoing support. The program offers 321 clock hours of instruction and training plus the internship. Interns meet their Field Supervisors (Instructional Coaches) during the summer prior to beginning the internship. Field Supervisors observe interns a minimum of every two weeks, and provide them with specific feedback and guidance. The first formal observation is within the first six-weeks. Observation feedback forms were seen in student folders.

The document review revealed different types of observations including walk-thrus, pop-ins, and rounds, with a pre-conference and post-conference with the intern for each one. Each observation is focused on one objective, as seen in the document review. For example in Week I, interns have a “pop-in” focused on classroom management, including classroom routines and procedures. The observation form for this has eight indicators that can be qualified and scored. Evidence for behavior indicators is required in terms of teacher language and student actions.

“Rounds” allow for scripting of teacher actions and student actions during observations lasting 45 minutes or more. The post-observation conference guide includes indicators for proficiency in the focus area. Evidence is transcribed onto the guide and “next steps” are written down by the Field Supervisor and Intern to help guide the intern to mastery.

Each intern receives a classroom observation summary which includes scores for each particular observation each semester in addition to individual observation forms. The summary indicates movement towards proficiency in each area during the semester and is discussed in depth by the field supervisor with the intern.

Each intern also has a campus mentor for additional support. Extensive handbooks have been developed for mentors and field supervisors. Mentors have specific contracts outlining their selection criteria and major responsibilities and duties. Mentors are required to participate in two online training sessions per academic year and attend four Teaching Excellence workshops. Mentors receive financial compensation from Yes Prep of \$400.00 per semester.

An Intervention Protocol has been developed for any struggling interns with many options for additional support.

Based on the evidence presented above, Yes Prep is in compliance with TAC 228.35.

Commendations: Yes Prep requires more than twice as much field observation as the state mandates, and has developed various types of focused, structured observations and necessary forms and rubrics for recording and evaluating behavior. Mentors, Field Supervisors and Interns work very closely together to form a strong support system for beginning teachers.

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

Findings:

Yes Prep is in compliance regarding TAC 228.40 Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates and Program Improvement. The document review revealed that this program uses research and data to drive decision making throughout the program. The program has developed a number of sophisticated tools for data-gathering and analysis. Collected data is then shared with Advisory Committee, teachers, interns, field supervisors, and mentors at various times.

For example, interns receive diagnostic feedback after working through the practice packet for their content exams. Interns must record each question they answer incorrectly and identify the competency the question addresses. Then they must create a brief chart to summarize their confidence levels on each competency. This information is then used by the Content Specialists to tailor a test review session.

The program uses both qualitative and quantitative data to examine curriculum and the overall program. They send quarterly surveys to teachers as well as requiring exit interviews about the ACP after pre-service training. During this first year, curriculum evaluation has occurred frequently and small adjustments have been required based on data collected.

Interns have not taken PPR exams yet and none have yet achieved standard certification.

Based on the evidence presented above, Yes Prep is in compliance with TAC 228.40.

Commendations:

- Yes Prep makes excellent use of data-driven decision-making for admission to program, assessment of candidate mastery of standards and competencies, and evaluation of curriculum and overall program.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Compliance Recommendations are based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency one-year 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 beginning in 2010.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: None at this time. Yes Prep is in compliance with all rules governing the five specific areas of concern delineated in this report.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Yes Prep should recommend all interns for the probationary certificate as soon as they pass the content examination and prior to beginning the teaching internship, per TAC 228.35 (C).
- Yes Prep should assign mentors that are certified teachers for all new interns. See the definition of mentor in TAC 228.2 (14).