



## Compliance Audit Report 2010-2011 South Texas College ACP

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](http://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 February 22-24, 2011. The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date Self-Report Submitted: Fall 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 South Texas College alternative certification program participants by TEA. A total of 25 responses to the surveys were received by TEA, including six from interns, six from school principals, eight from campus mentors, and five from advisory committee members. No field supervisors returned the survey. A self-report was submitted to TEA by South Texas College in fall 2010. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation were used to evaluate the evidence.

The Opening Session February 23, 2011 was attended by five people, including Dr. Ali Esmaeili, Dean of South Texas College, Diana Narváez, manager of the alternative certification program, Lori Treviño, Chief Operations Officer for the college, and Jose and Carmen Sepulveda, who serve as field supervisors and instructors. Three people attended the Closing Session February 24, 2011: Ruben Saenz, advisory committee member and former school superintendent, Ms. Treviño, and Ms. Narváez.

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

#### **Findings:**

Component I concerns governance of the program by the advisory committee. The advisory committee currently has 11 members: two members representing local schools and districts, six

from higher education, two from business and community interests, and one the Regional Education Service Center. The roles and responsibilities for the advisory committee are clearly delineated in a written description reviewed by program specialists during the document review. Of the five advisory committee members who returned the electronic questionnaire to TEA, all five responded that they were familiar with TAC§ 227, §228, and §229. Four indicated that the advisory committee participates in designing or revising the curriculum for the program and in making major policy decisions. One of the recent policy decisions by the advisory committee is to resubmit an application to offer the Generalist EC-6 certification in the near future.

Four 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, three responding positively and two responding negatively. Three members indicated that the committee evaluates data for the program every 12 months in order to plan improvement, and one indicates involvement only every three-five years.

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 2006-2010 were available during the document review. According to the self-report, meetings were scheduled for September 30, 2010, November 18, 2010, January 20, 2011, and May 20, 2011. Minutes from the September 30, 2010 meeting were available at the document review. 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, South Texas College alternative teacher 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:**

Component II concerns admission criteria for educator preparation programs. South Texas 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 and GPAs were kept in student files. Of the 16 student transcripts reviewed in student folders, only one had a GPA of less than 2.5, thus aligning with the 10% cohort rule in TAC §227.10 (B). The program reviews transcripts to make sure candidates have the appropriate number of college hours required to be admitted for a particular certification field. The Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Test is utilized to screen applicants, fulfilling TAC §227.10 (6). These instruments are also in student folders. Applicants are given a brief ten-question interview by the program manager prior to admission in English, or also in

Spanish if the candidate wishes bilingual certification. Interview questions and rubrics in Spanish and English were reviewed during the document review by TEA program specialists.

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, with a minimum score of 61. The self-report indicated that fewer than five foreign students have been admitted. Admissions criteria are published on the college website and in brochures.

One hundred-nine new candidates were admitted to the program during the past academic year, with 19 finishers. Eighteen candidates are enrolled as interns for this academic year. Some candidates who have passed the Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) for their particular area of certification have been admitted into the program, and others must pass the TExES content exam after admission to the program. On the electronic questionnaires received at TEA from South Texas College candidates, two of the six who responded have passed the PACT, and four did not take the PACT.

**Based on the evidence presented above, South Texas 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:**

Component III reviews program adherence to required curriculum for educator preparation. Three charts showing alignment of standards and TEKS to curriculum modules and activities were prepared by South Texas College and reviewed by TEA program specialists during the document review. The charts document the standards alignment for Generalist 4-8, Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) EC-12, and the 17 mandated topics in Texas Administrative Code §228.30. All required standards and TEKS were shown to be present in the South Texas College curriculum. South Texas College does not offer the Generalist EC-6 certificate at this time.

Thirty clock hours of content preparation are given to those candidates who have not tested through PACT who are enrolled in the South Texas College program. Syllabi for Math 8-12, English Language Arts 8-12, Social Studies 8-12, and Generalist 4-8 were reviewed by TEA program specialists. The syllabi contained domains and competencies for each field, the attendance and absence policy, homework assignments, and class activities. The program is approved to offer several other certificate areas, but no students are currently seeking those certifications, according to Ms. Narváez. Candidates who passed the PACT exam have not been required to take any hours in content preparation, but TEA program specialists encourage the program to develop coursework so that all candidates receive a minimum of 300 clock hours. Two known candidates who tested through PACT have not received the minimum number of clock hours of preparation.

Prior to internship, candidates must also complete 30 clock hours of training in Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR), and another 30 clock hours of classroom management.

Syllabi for these two courses show that the content covered is wide-ranging, however. All handouts reviewed for these two courses appear to be downloaded directly from the internet.

The syllabus for the PPR course indicates PPR standards, domains and competencies. As soon as this course is finished, candidates are encouraged to take the PPR exam. Using the PPR EC-12 standards as a guide, the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities course covers diverse topics such as cooperative learning; child development; creating a positive classroom climate; implementing effective, responsive instruction and assessment; technology application; Bloom's taxonomy; family involvement; Texas Educator's Code of Ethics; test-taking strategies; and reading instruction including organization of text structure, fluency building strategies, vocabulary strategies, word analysis skills, and comprehension skills. The class also reviews the Technology Applications Standards for All Beginning Teachers from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). Classroom time is spent discussing the competencies for the standards, and a handout on creating electronic portfolios. No actual practice on computers or other technology is available for the candidates during the class.

The 30 clock-hour course called Classroom Management has a list to topics to be covered each day titled "Syllabus." The syllabus does not contain any other information however. The course covers the following topics: 1) effective classroom management using Harry Wong's material; 2) effective systems of classroom management, drawing on seven different models; 3) writing an effective lesson plan; 4) teaching and using critical thinking strategies which covers the lesson cycle and Bloom's taxonomy; 5) understanding the PDAS teacher evaluation instrument, a topic which is repeated again during the internship; 6) overview of second language acquisition including presentation of student lesson plans from Day 3; 7) LEP criteria for entry/exit, including several special education topics like inclusion, ARDS, IEPs, and IDEA; 8) characteristics and behavior of the gifted, which was mis-filed in the binder under First Year Survival; 9) Teaching Five E's, also mis-filed under First Year Survival; and 10) first year survival, which includes scheduling, weekly lesson planning, typical classroom forms and letters, and an article on interactive classrooms.

Candidates continue to meet one evening per week during internship for more training during the fall and spring semesters. No actual syllabi were available for these courses, but a day-by-day list of topics was reviewed by TEA program specialists. Two three-ring binders were available that contained handouts and some PowerPoint presentations used in the fall and spring classes. Again, the topics were wide-ranging, and did not seem organized in a coherent fashion. For example the topic "Identifying learning needs" used handouts on diagnosing learning disabilities and examples of student learning contracts. Other topics included site base [sic] decision making, sheltered instruction application, and scientifically based reading research. Cooperative learning is presented again, as well as curriculum requirements (Texas Knowledge and Skills), differentiated instruction based on the theory of multiple intelligences, theories of intellectual child development, developing creativity, state assessments, and content development [using] manipulatives/measurements. Strategies for teaching English for second language learners are addressed as well teamwork for the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) process.

A12 clock-hour project is completed in the fall during the internship. Candidates are to develop two 2-week-long unit plans that can be used in their classrooms. Up until now, these unit plans have not been graded individually, but a scoring rubric is in the process of development, according to Ms. Narváez.

The integration of technology and strategies for formative and summative assessment are assigned as research projects for the candidates to complete during the spring semester. The technology project requires candidates to write a seven-ten page paper describing how they would use technology to present a lesson in the classroom. A PowerPoint presentation can also be included in the project. Candidates are required to include the lesson objectives and TEKS/TAKS objective and identify the technology utilized for presenting the lesson to the students. These projects are graded by Ms. Narváez. No rubric was available at this time of the visit, but Ms. Narváez commented that she would be developing one soon. The technology project counts for 12 clock-hours of program instruction in the program.

For the research project on assessment, candidates are required to write a four-six page paper comparing and contrasting two types of assessments from a list provided. The choices are: 1) criterion-referenced tests vs. standardized tests; 2) formative assessments vs. summative assessments; 3) informal vs. formal assessments; 4) knowledge-based assessments vs. higher order thinking assessments; 5) standards-based testing vs. criterion-referenced testing (see number one above); 6) psychological tests vs. psychiatric evaluations; 7) behavioral analysis tests vs. I.Q. tests; 8) diagnostic tests vs. achievement tests; 9) aptitude tests vs. pre-employment assessments; 10) critical thinking tests vs. multiple choice tests; and finally 11) placement tests vs. diagnostic tests. This project is graded holistically as a written paper. The program also counts this project as 12 clock-hours of instruction.

TEA program specialists suggested to Ms. Narvaez that the individual research projects might be contained in other course modules in order to have more actual class instruction time.

Six of the six interns responding to the TEA electronic questionnaire (out of a total of 18 current interns) responded that the program had trained them in all 17 topics required in TAC §228.30. Only one candidate responded that he or she had not yet received training in standards and teaching strategies for students with limited English proficiency, perhaps because he or she had not progressed to the spring internship course yet.

Even though it appears that all required curriculum components are present in the alternative teacher certification program for South Texas College, several suggestions for improvement were made by TEA program specialists during the visit. For example, the three research projects might be more beneficial if they were more rigorous and scored by rubrics to provide concrete feedback to the novice teachers. Detailed syllabi should be developed for the fall and spring internship courses, similar to the syllabi for the content courses. The classroom management course might focus more time on theories and practices of classroom management, rather than trying to cover a little bit of everything. Since classroom management is usually the area that new teachers have most difficulty with in the actual classroom, more time might be spent reading and discussing various models of classroom management, viewing video of typical classroom management scenarios, developing class rules, etc. The way the course is designed at present, less than six clock hours is devoted to the actual topic of how to manage classroom procedures and student behavior. More time spent on reading instruction across the curriculum might also benefit candidates as they enter the profession. Many good, free resources are available online to all programs and could easily be incorporated

**Based on the evidence presented above, South Texas 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:**

Component IV concerns mandated program hours and field supervision and mentoring. A chart titled “New Program Design for 2010-2011 Academic Year” prepared by the program director indicates that the program offers 300 clock hours of coursework and training in addition to internship. A program hours chart supplied by TEA and completed by the director during the visit indicates 322 total coursework hours. During discussion with the program director and TEA specialists, the conclusion that the program offers 319 clock hours was reached. It appears that even though the program is not clear on the number of hours they are offering, they are providing a minimum of 300 clock hours as required to all students except those who passed PACT and do not take content preparation hours.

The program requires a minimum of 90 clock hours of coursework and 30 hours of field-based experience prior to the internship. Field-based experience is documented by candidate logs and notes found in folders. Six hours of explicit test preparation is provided. During the fall internship course, candidates receive another 54 hours, including the 12-hour unit plan project. In the spring internship course, candidates receive 72 additional clock hours, including 12 hours for the technology project and 12 hours for the assessment project. In addition, the program teaches 12 hours of “employability skills” which includes resume preparation, interviewing skills and another review of the Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics. South Texas College accepts 50 hours of professional development as provided by school districts, according to the self-report and program hours chart. Documentation from the school district was found to this effect by TEA program specialists in one student folder from a completer from last year. Ms. Narváez said candidates generally bring this documentation at the end of the year for their files.

Field supervisors from South Texas College, who are also TxBESS trainers, provide two hours of TxBESS training to classroom mentors and interns at the beginning of the internship. Sign-in sheets with 29 mentor signatures were reviewed by TEA program specialists during the document review. A mentor handbook contained policies and procedures as well as TxBESS materials. Field supervisors’ resumes confirm that they have over 30 years experience each. A field supervisor handbook was reviewed. The date and time in/time out are listed on observation forms used by the field supervisors. Initial contact by the field supervisors with the interns is within the first three weeks of assignment, as documented by the dated form. Formal observations are a minimum of 45 minutes long. First year interns receive three formal observations and a walk-thru as documented by the forms seen in their student files. In the past the few second or third-year interns have not received field supervision, but TEA program specialist recommended that they do so in discussions with Ms. Narváez and the field supervisors. Field supervisors described frequent informal meetings with campus principals to discuss interns during the year, but sometimes copies of the written evaluations were not left with the administrator. Ways to correct this were discussed by TEA program specialists, the director, and the field supervisors during the visit.

Because 1) some students do not receive a minimum of 300 clock hours of training; 2) second or third year interns are not receiving field supervision; and 3) intern observation forms are not always left for the campus principal, South Texas College alternative teacher certification program is out of compliance with TAC §228.35.

**Based on the evidence presented above, South Texas College is not 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:**

Component V concerns assessment and evaluation of candidates and overall curriculum and program delivery. Benchmarks are present, even though they are not clearly delineated by the program. Regarding educator preparation programs, “benchmarks” are considered to be those tasks that a candidate must complete successfully before moving forward to the next phase of teacher preparation. For example, candidates must successfully complete the content preparation courses (or the PACT), the classroom management course, the PPR course and the field-based experiences before moving on to the internship through the South Texas College ACP. According to the self-report, interns that fail to pass a TExES exam are required to attend the next content or PPR course before receiving permission to test again.

Assessment of candidate work during courses is limited to pop quizzes, vocabulary tests, short answer responses, class discussion and submission of assignments. As mentioned above, more rigorous assessment of major projects would contribute to candidate improvement. Candidates take parts of the representative forms of the TExES exams at various points during the program and must make a minimum of 75 before being allowed to test.

Candidates are screened prior to admission for GPA, oral language ability, critical thinking ability, basic skills and graduation from a four-year regionally accredited university

The three years of test pass rate data available show that South Texas College ACP had a pass rate of 90% in 2010, 94% in 2009, and 100% in 2008. Their scores are well above the current 70% acceptable score, but the program should note that the standards are increasing for 2011 and 2012.

According to the self-report, the program evaluates overall performance anytime unfavorable test results are received. TExES pass rates, qualitative evaluations from program participants, and other data are used to analyze program performance. Copies of qualitative end-of-course evaluations by candidates were reviewed by TEA program specialists. The self-report indicates that curriculum is reviewed every two years by the program director, instructors, and teaching candidates. Electronic questionnaires returned to TEA by five advisory committee members (out of a total of 11) indicate that four members responded that they were involved in overall program evaluation, and one member responded that he or she was not. Such a response

could indicate a new committee member who had not yet been involved in this task. Three committee members responded that the advisory committee participates in curriculum evaluation every 12 months, and one indicated participation every three-to-five years. According to TAC §228.40, the advisory committee must be involved in curriculum and overall program evaluation.

Candidate files dating from 2007, the first year of operation, through 2011 are kept in a secure location. The program understands that files must be kept a minimum of five years.

**Based on the evidence presented above, South Texas College is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 – ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.**

## **PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS**

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.**

- Ensure that all candidates receive a minimum of 300 clock hours of training.
- Ensure that all second and third-year interns receive field supervision and a minimum of three formal observations.
- Ensure that completed intern observation forms are given to all campus principals.

**GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.**

- Create syllabi for all courses listing standards, competencies, and domains.
- Re-organize courses to provide more instructional time on critical topics such as classroom management, reading instruction for all certification fields, special education, English Language Proficiency Strategies (ELPS), and a variety of pedagogical strategies for each certification area.
- Assess all candidate work rigorously.
- Require candidates to demonstrate proficiency with 21<sup>st</sup> century technology in class, and to devise projects in which their own students utilize technology.
- Consider restructuring instruction on assessment to include authentic assessment and teacher-made tests.