



Compliance Report 2012-2013 ACT-Rio Grande Valley 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 rules at www.tea.state.tx.us for details.

Contact Information: Dr. Kathleen Vinger

County/District Number: 108701

SBEC Approval Date: October 5, 2001

Program Specialists, Mixon Henry and Scott Lewis, conducted a Texas Education Agency Compliance Audit of ACT-Rio Grande Valley (ACT-RGV) alternative teacher preparation program, located at 612 West Nolana, Suite 540, McAllen, Texas, 75081 on June 25-27, 2013. The focus of the compliance audit was the initial teacher certification program and the Generalist EC-6 certificate. The following are findings and recommendations for program improvement.

SCOPE OF THE COMPLIANCE AUDIT:

The scope of this audit was restricted solely to verifying compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227, §228, §229, and §230.

Data Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) governing educator preparation programs was collected by various quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A self-report was submitted to the Texas Education Agency on November 28, 2012. There was a delay in the originally scheduled audit date of January 8-10, 2013 at the request of the program due to personal issues. The audit was rescheduled to the noted June 25-27, 2013, date. An on-site review of documents, student records, course material, and curriculum correlations charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition, electronic questionnaires were sent to ACT-RGV stakeholders. Out of six hundred one (601) questionnaires sent to stakeholders, a

total of one hundred thirty-six (136) responses or (22.6%) were received as follows: four (4) out of eleven (11) advisory committee members (36%); fifty-three (53) out of two hundred fifty-nine (259) educator candidates (20%); five (5) out of ten (10) field supervisors (50%), twenty-six (26) out of one hundred sixteen (116) campus principals (22%); and forty-eight (48) out of two hundred five (205) cooperating teachers (23%). Quantitative and qualitative methods 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 to Texas Administrative Code.

Opening and Closing Session:

The opening session on June 25, 2013, was attended by five (5) people in support of ACT – Rio Grande Valley. The noted members of the ACT-RGV program present included:

- Dr. Kathleen Vinger, Director of ACT-RGV,
- Ms. Pat Avila, ACT-RGV, Elementary Certification,
- Ms. Janie Trevino, ACT – RGV Certification Officer,
- Mr. Rob Peterson, ACT-RGV Secondary Certification, and
- Ms. Sheryl Hudgens, ACT – RGV Training and Test Facilitator.

The closing session on June 27, 2013, was attended by five (5) people. They included the same composition of Dr. Kathleen Vinger, Director of ACT-RGV and staff.

COMPONENT I: COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20

FINDINGS:

Program support was indicated by the governing body of ACT – Rio Grande Valley per TAC §228.20(c) as evidenced by participation and cooperation of Kathleen Vinger, Pat Avila, Rob Peterson, and Sheryl Hudgens in all steps and stages of the compliance audit.

According to the self-report and evidence found during the audit, the advisory committee met twice during the 2011-2012 academic year (September 1 through August 31), and has met twice during the 2012-2013 academic year. Membership of the ACT - RGV's advisory committee consists of eleven (11) members. Six (6) members represent public/private schools; two (2) member represents higher education; one (1) member represent the education service center (Region 1 ESC); and two (2) members represents community/business interests. ACT - RGV meets TAC §228.20(b) requirements for advisory committee composition.

Following are the historical dates of each advisory committee meeting, noting topics covered (sign-in sheets, agendas, and minutes for verification):

Academic year 2012 – 2013:

- June 16, 2013
 - Sign-in sheets, agendas, and minutes were provided and included the following:
 - Announcement that Rob Peterson, Pat Avila, and Janie Trevino are now partners in ACT – Rio Grande Valley

- Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) is still a requirement for admission into program, discussion of the pros and cons to the issue,
- Performance based academic coaching, prior to admissions was discussed as to why it cannot count as curriculum hours,
- Changes in personnel at TEA were presented,
- Possible changes in Generalist EC-6 and 4-8 testing (passing each section of test), and
- FERPA issues discussed and how it will affect candidates, program, and schools.
- December 6, 2012:
 - Sign-in sheets, agendas, and minutes were provided and included the following:
 - Previous meeting minutes,
 - Updates – 140 interns in program a 25% increase,
 - Grade Point Average (GPA) change: 2.5 GPA overall or 2.75 GPA in last 60 hours,
 - Another admissions change, only Mathematics and Science will be considered for the 10% rule (allowing candidates with a GPA below 2.5),
 - Advisory Committee training (includes roles and responsibilities), and
 - Suggestions for the program.

Academic year 2011 - 2012:

- May 2012:
 - Advisory Meeting was cancelled due to ACT – RGV's office roof leaking and flooding causing damage, requiring a large scale clean-up.
- December 13, 2011:
 - Sign-in sheets, agendas, PowerPoint, and minutes provided, which included the following:
 - Previous minutes from last Advisory Committee meeting,
 - Program updates,
 - Introduction of field supervisors and their roles and responsibilities, and
 - Suggestions for the program.

Academic year 2010 - 2011:

- May 12, 2011:
 - Sign-in sheets, agendas, PowerPoint, and minutes provided, which included the following:
 - Review of minutes of prior Advisory Committee meeting December 2, 2010,
 - ACT – RGV is charging \$100 for test preparation, if the candidate is not enrolled in ACT – RGV,
 - “Scaffolded Solutions” was discussed about clock hours and district training and housing certain candidate documentation there, and
 - Discussion about confidentiality issues with PDAS observation information housed there.
- December 2, 2010:
 - Sign-in sheets, agendas, PowerPoint, and minutes provided, which included the following:
 - TEA pilot surveys, SB 174 created,

- Additional information required by TEA for programs: Content GPA, Overall GPA, GPA in certification field, and results from observations,
- Clinical teaching update: three candidates have successfully completed the practicum, and
- Economy has had a negative effect on teaching placement, districts have less money and are not replacing some teachers, and class sizes are increasing.

Academic year 2009 - 2010:

- April 29, 2010:
 - sign-in sheets, agendas, PowerPoint, and minutes provided, which included the following:
 - TEA pilot surveys for candidates receiving their standard certificates were discussed
 - Clinical teaching option for candidate practicum discussed (same as student teaching – 12 weeks full day assignment; used by ACPs),
 - Adding the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking test will now be used to evaluate candidates,
 - Discussion - allow candidates to take the PPR test prior to the teaching practicum, and
 - Deans and Directors meeting coming in May.
- November 12, 2009:
 - sign-in sheets, agendas, PowerPoint, and minutes provided, which included the following:
 - Enrollment is down for ACT – RGV, as well as state wide,
 - CATE changes,
 - NCLB impact on programs, districts, and candidates,
 - Changes in TAC 229 for program accountability, and
 - Exit survey for candidates, applying for a standard certificate.

The program meets the requirements for conducting a minimum of two advisory committee meetings per academic year as required by TAC §228.20(b).

Past agendas reflected evidence of advisory committee review of policies and program design, but minutes do not reflect input in program evaluation and on-going field based experience as specified in TAC §228.35(d).

Based on the evidence presented, ACT – Rio Grande Valley is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

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

FINDINGS:

According to the self-report submitted by ACT - RGV Director, to be admitted into the program, the candidate must have:

- completed a bachelors' degree from a regionally accredited university [TAC §227.10(a)(2)];
- passing score on a Pre-Admissions Content Test (PACT) in the content area to be certified, "An only exception from the PACT is for the Career and Technology Education application" , as noted in discussions with ACT – RGV staff and noted on the program website [TAC §227.10(a)(3)(C)];
- received a GPA of 2.50 [TAC §227.10(a)(3)(A)];
- completed a minimum of twelve (12) semester credit hours in a content field [TAC §227.10(C)];
- demonstrated basic skills proficiency with THEA, TASP, or course work noted in Texas Success Initiative [TAC §227.10(4)];
- demonstrated adequate oral communication skills; TOEFL [TAC §230.413];
- submitted an application [TAC §227.10(a)(6)];
- participated in an interview or screening instrument to determine the educator preparation candidate's appropriateness for the certification sought, Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking test is administered to perspective candidates; [TAC §227.10(a)(6)]; and
- met any other academic criteria for admission that are published and applied consistently to all educator preparation candidates which are the following: Writing sample, which is a simple paragraph on the application. The Trade and Industry candidates must have a resume with a licensure, [TAC §227.10(7)].

Out-of-country applicants, whose first language is not English, must demonstrate competence in the English language by submission of a minimum oral score (26) on the computer-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). In addition, the applicant must have his/her transcripts from an out-of-country non-English speaking university evaluated by an approved evaluation service [TAC §227.10(7)]. According to the self-report, the program required the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), a Bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. institution, or a minimum of a Bachelor's degree from out-of-country English speaking university. It was noted that no out-of-country candidates have been admitted into the program.

In eleven (11) candidates' records reviewed, it was noted that all were admitted with a grade point average ranging from 2.4 to 3.94 [TAC §227.10(A)]. Since there was one GPA below the required 2.5, documentation was necessary to explain the extraordinary circumstances. There was no letter or document found to denote extraordinary circumstances, thus TAC §227.10(3)(b) was not met. It was also noted that the program used "contingency admission" for applicants who have not yet had their degrees conferred by a university (TAC §227.15). A statement from the university is required to verify current enrollment in the final semester and the arrival in a timely manner of the official transcripts and confirmation of the degree.

Transcripts found in the eleven (11) records confirmed a minimum of 12 semester credit hours in the subject-specific content area for which certification was sought. ACT – RGV met the requirements of TAC §227.10(C).

Applicants are required to take the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking test that serves as an “other screening instrument” [TAC §227.10(6)]. Mastery of basic skills per TAC §227.10(4) was verified in all eleven (11) candidates reviewed. The official transcripts recorded SAT, ACT, GRE, or THEA scores or indicated that candidates were admitted using the Texas Success Initiative exemptions. The program met the requirement of TAC 227.10(4).

The self-report stated that information about the program and its admission requirements were available through the ACT - RGV website. In review, it was confirmed that the admission information was aligned with the documentation found in candidates’ records.

Based on the evidence presented, ACT – Rio Grande Valley is not in compliance with TAC §227.10 - Admission Criteria.

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

FINDINGS:

ACT – Rio Grande Valley is approved to offer teacher certification in forty-five (45) certification fields, and four (4) supplemental fields. For the purpose of this compliance audit, the Generalist EC-6 certificate was selected for an in-depth review.

According to the self-report, qualifications necessary to be selected as a course instructor included an advanced degree and teacher certification in the state of Texas, five (5) years teaching experience, and principal or superintendent certification. Instructor vitas were presented for review. All instructors have a master’s degree or higher, a Texas Teaching Certificate, five (5) or more years of classroom teaching experience, and administrative experience

In reviewing the Generalist EC-6 curriculum, it was noted that the educator standards were not the curricular basis for instruction as required by TAC §228.30(a). The alignment charts submitted by the program served as the basis for reviewing the program modules. The alignment charts and modules reflected a gap in the educator standards in art, music, and theater. In reviewing other content areas of the Generalist EC-6 curriculum, standards were addressed and verified in modules and alignment charts. The decision made by the program was to require the PACT prior to admission into the program for most certification fields.

The module summaries and alignment charts for the Generalist EC-6 curriculum addressed the relevant Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as required by TAC §228.30(a). In formal discussion with an instructor and ACT - RGV staff regarding where the TEKS were addressed, it was verified that the program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(a).

Verification of the seventeen (17) subject matter topics required by TAC §228.30(b) yielded the following results:

- Evidence that the specified instructional requirements for reading per TAC §228.30(b)(1) was provided in the Generalist EC-6 curriculum. Six courses [Reading, Equity for the Exceptional Learner, Curriculum Planning and Delivery, Framework for Effective Teaching, Classroom Management, and Intern Development Sessions (IDS)] address the five essential components of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It was verified that all candidates, no matter the certification sought, received reading instruction. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(1);

- Evidence that the specified instructional requirements for child development per TAC §228.30(b)(3) was verified in Framework for Effective Teaching and Classroom Management. The two course module summaries and alignment charts verified course content. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(3);
- Evidence that the specified instructional requirements for motivation per TAC §228.30(b)(4) was found in Classroom Management, Framework for Effective Teaching, Curriculum Planning, Reading, and Equity for the Exceptional Learner. The alignment charts and module summaries verified the content. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(4);
- Evidence that the specified instructional requirements for learning theories per TAC §228.30(b)(5) was found in the alignment charts and verified in the module summaries of three (3) courses: Framework for Effective Teaching, Curriculum Planning, and Reading. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(5);
- Evidence that instruction covering TEKS organization, structure, and skills per TAC §228.30(b)(6) was found in the alignment charts and in the module summaries of five (5) courses: Curriculum Planning, Reading, Equity for the Exceptional Learner, IDS (Intern Development Sessions), and Tracking Student Progress. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(6);
- Evidence that TEKS in the content areas instruction per TAC §228.30(b)(7), was found in alignment charts and in the module summaries of four (4) courses: Curriculum Planning, Reading, Equity for the Exceptional Learner, and IDS (Intern Development Sessions). The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(7);
- Evidence that the state assessment of students per TAC §228.20(b)(8) was found in the alignment charts and in the module summaries of three (3) courses: STAAR, Tracking Student Progress, and IDS (Intern Development Sessions). The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(8);
- Evidence that the process of curriculum development per TAC §228.30(b)(9) was found in the alignment charts and in the module summaries of six (6) courses: Framework for Effective Teaching, Curriculum Planning, Reading, Classroom Management, Equity for the Exceptional Learner, and Tracking Student Progress. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(9);
- Evidence that instruction in classroom assessment per TAC §228.30(b)(10) was found in the alignment charts and in the module summaries of four (4) courses: Curriculum Planning, Reading, Equity for the Exceptional Learner, and IDS (Intern Development Sessions). The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(10).
- Evidence that instruction in diagnosing learning needs per TAC §228.30(b)(10) was found in alignment charts and in the module summaries of four (4) courses: Curriculum Planning, Reading, Equity for the Exceptional Learner, and IDS (Intern Development Sessions). The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(10);
- Evidence of instruction in classroom management per TAC 228.30(b)(11) was found in the alignment charts and verified in the syllabi of six (6) courses: Classroom Management, Framework for Effective Teaching, Curriculum Planning, Reading, Equity

for the Exceptional Learner, and IDS (Intern Development Sessions). The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(11);

- Evidence that instruction in developing a positive learning environment per TAC 228.30(b)(11) was found in the module summaries of six (6) courses: Classroom Management, Framework for Effective Teaching, Curriculum Planning, Reading, Equity for the Exceptional Learner, and IDS (Intern Development Sessions). The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(11);
- Evidence that instruction in special populations per TAC §228.30(b)(12), was found in alignment charts and module summaries of three (3) course: Reading, Equity for the Exceptional Learner, and IDS (Intern Development Sessions). The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(12);
- Evidence that instruction in parent conferencing and communication skills per TAC §228.30(b)(13) was found in both the alignment charts and module summaries of two (2) courses: Classroom Management and IDS (Intern Development Sessions). The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(13);
- Evidence of instruction in instructional technology per TAC §228.30(b)(14), was found in alignment charts and module summaries of two (2) courses: Technology Workshop and Web page Design. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(14);
- Evidence of pedagogy and instructional strategies per TAC §228.30(b)(15) was found in the alignment charts and module summaries verified in the of six (6) courses: Classroom Management, Framework for Effective Teaching, Curriculum Planning, Reading, Equity for the Exceptional Learner, and IDS (Intern Development Sessions). The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(15);
- Evidence of instruction in differentiated instruction per TAC §228.30(b)(16) was found in alignment charts and in the syllabi of three (3) courses: Curriculum Planning, Reading, and Equity for the Exceptional Learner. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(16); and
- Evidence of 6 hours of certification test preparation per TAC §228.30(b)(17) was documented by attendance sign-in sheets and scores from PPR review. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.30(b)(17) and TAC §228.35(a)(3).

Responses from the principal questionnaires regarding curriculum preparation of candidates were as follows:

- Knowledge of and use of models and methodologies of classroom management: Yes – 80% No – 20%
- Knowledge of academic and behavioral needs of students with disabilities: Yes – 76% No – 24%
- Skill in communicating clear expectations for achievement and behavior: Yes – 84% No-16%
- Knowledge of and use of technology to support and extend student learning: Yes – 79.2% No – 20.8%
- Collaboration with others: Yes – 80% No – 20%
- Knowledge of academic and behavioral needs of students with Limited English Proficiency: Yes – 79.2%
No – 20.8%

- Knowledge of and use of formal and informal assessments: Yes – 66.7% No – 33.3%

Responses from mentor or cooperating teachers' questionnaires regarding the candidates' curriculum preparation were as follows:

- Knowledge of and use of reading strategies: Yes – 83.3% No – 16.7%
- Knowledge of the Code of Ethics: Yes – 93.3% No – 6.7%
- Knowledge of child and adolescent development: Yes – 88.9% No – 11.1%
- Knowledge of and use of instructional methods to motivate students: Yes – 86.7% No – 13.3%
- Knowledge of and use of theories of how people learn: Yes – 77.8% No – 22.2%
- TEKS: organization, structure, and skills: Yes – 88.9% No – 11.1%
- TEKS in the content areas: Yes – 88.9% No – 11.1%
- Knowledge of and role in STAAR testing: Yes – 77.8% No – 22.2%
- Skill in developing lessons: Yes – 88.9% No – 11.1%
- Knowledge of curriculum development: Yes – 77.8% No – 22.2%
- Knowledge of and use of classroom assessments: Yes – 79.5% No – 20.5%
- Knowledge of and use of formative assessments: Yes – 73.3% No – 26.7%
- Knowledge of and use of models and methodologies of classroom management: Yes – 84.4%
No – 15.6%
- Knowledge of laws and standards for Special Education: Yes – 75.6% No – 24.4%
- Knowledge of and use of standards and teaching strategies for GT students: Yes – 64.4% No – 35.6%
- Knowledge of and use of standards and teaching strategies for LEP students: Yes – 75.6% No – 24.4%
- Skill in preparing and conducting parent conferences: Yes – 62.2% No – 37.8%
- Knowledge of and use of a variety of instructional methods: Yes – 82.2% No – 17.8%
- Knowledge of and use of technology to support and extend student learning: Yes – 91.1% No – 8.9%

Responses from clinical teachers or interns in regard to their perception of their curriculum preparation were as follows:

- Knowledge of and use of reading strategies: Yes – 86.5% No – 13.5%
- Knowledge of the Code of Ethics: Yes – 100% Knowledge of child and adolescent development: Yes – 88.5% No – 11.5%
- Knowledge of and use of instructional methods to motivate students: Yes – 92.3% No – 7.7%
- Knowledge of and use of theories of how people learn: Yes – 94.2% No – 5.8%

- TEKS: organization, structure, and skills: Yes – 92.3% No – 7.7%
- Use of TEKS in the content areas: Yes – 90.4% No – 9.6%
- Knowledge of and role in STAAR testing: Yes – 80.5% No – 13.5%
- Skill in developing lessons: Yes – 96.2% No – 3.8%
- Knowledge of curriculum development: Yes – 92.3% No – 7.7%
- Knowledge of and use of classroom assessments: Yes – 94.2% No – 5.8%
- Knowledge of and use of formative assessments: Yes – 92.3% No – 7.7%
- Knowledge of and use of models and methodologies of classroom management: Yes – 96.2%
No – 3.8%
- Knowledge of laws and standards for Special Education: Yes – 96.2% No – 3.8%
- Knowledge of and use of standards and teaching strategies for GT students: Yes – 80.8% No – 19.2%
- Knowledge of and use of standards and teaching strategies for LEP students: Yes – 96.2% No – 3.8%
- Skill in preparing and conducting parent conferences: Yes – 100%
- Knowledge of and use of a variety of instructional methods: Yes – 100%
- Knowledge of and use of technology to support and extend student learning: Yes – 90.2% No – 9.8%

In addition to the courses named in the seventeen (17) subject matter topics, ACT – RGV has additional coursework which is provided during the internship. The following courses were noted and reviewed during the audit: Dyslexia, Autism, Rubrics and Grading, Ethics, Differentiated Instruction, Cooperative Learning, Writing Across the Curriculum, Hands On and Foldables, Gifted and Talented. These sessions can be presented in a webinar format or by the field supervisors or as the needs arise. It was noted during the audit that a restructuring of the curriculum was in process. There were discussions with ACT – RGV staff regarding how implementing the PACT will affect the curriculum.

Based on evidence presented, ACT – Rio Grande Valley is not in compliance with TAC §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum.

COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35

FINDINGS:

Currently, ACT – Rio Grande Valley is delivered in a face-to-face format, supplemented with webinars. In reviewing the self-report and in discussions with staff, the training hours offered by the program totaled 321 clock-hours for the Generalist EC - 6 certificate. The total clock-hours are 321 clock hours, which exceeded the minimum requirements set forth in TAC §228.35(a)(3).

The program provided sufficient evidence that six clock-hours of test preparation was not embedded in any other curriculum elements per TAC §228.35(a)(3) and was offered to all

candidates. Readiness to test was based on completion of coursework and success on the representative test. Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) test preparation is provided in a session called, "Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility Review". Original sign-in sheets were evidence of attendance. The program met the requirements for test preparation per TAC §228.35(a)(3).

Completion of the required thirty clock-hours of field-based experience was verified by documentation found in the candidate records. The field-based experience documentation required the name of school, classroom, subject taught, and reflections by the candidates. Documentation also revealed that field-based observations occurred in a limited range of educational settings with limited diverse student populations, but included observations, modeling, and demonstration of effective practices to improve student learning. It was discussed with program staff that the variety of settings should extend to a wider range of economic, ethnic, and age groups. Per TAC §228.35(a)(7), the program may allow candidates to substitute prior ongoing experience and/or professional training for part of the educator preparation requirements. However, previous experience cannot replace internship, student teaching, or clinical teaching. ACT - RGV has allowed for such an accommodation in the past, but is not continuing the policy. Additionally, up to fifteen (15) clock hours of electronic transmission can be used. The Annenberg video series is used by the program. Candidates are still required to provide the same documentation for the field based experience as in TEA approved schools. Field-based experiences were completed as required in TAC §228.35(d).

Eighty (80) clock-hours of coursework prior to clinical teaching/internship were verified through benchmarks and data tracking system. ACT - RGV meets this requirement [TAC §228.35(a)(3)(B)]. According to the self-report, the program's hour chart allows district training hours to count toward the required 300 clock hours. It was verified by proper district documentation and provided in candidates' folders. [TAC §228.35(a)(5)].

Clinical teaching [TAC §228.35(d)(2)(B)] was conducted for a period of twelve (12) weeks. There is a 2-3 week pre-clinical teaching to familiarize the candidate with the teacher, students, curriculum, and school. That stated, a candidate must complete a minimum of twelve (12) weeks and the actual time continues until the full twelve week hour equivalency is met. These requirements were explained to candidates prior to selecting that option. Clinical teaching placement information was found in the current candidates' records. Internship is also offered by ACT - RGV, it is the most commonly used practicum by candidates. The internship consists of serving as teacher of record for one academic year or a minimum of 180 days at a TEA approved school [TAC §228.35(d)(2)(C)]. Information, requirements, and policies were provided to candidates in their program handbook.

Evidence was found in the candidates' records of clinical teaching and internship placement, which verified that each took place in actual school settings rather than a distance learning lab or virtual school setting. All clinical teacher and internship placements occurred in local independent school districts or TEA approved schools. The candidates' placements met the requirements of TAC §228.35(d)(2)(C)(ii).

According to TAC §228.35(e), ACT - RGV is responsible for providing mentors and/or cooperating teacher training that is scientifically-based or verify that training was provided by a school district or education service center. ACT - RGV's training curriculum is an abridged form of the TxBESS program. The training involves both the candidate and mentor/cooperating teacher. The mentor/cooperating teacher receives a \$400 stipend for their role in training and supporting the candidate. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.35(e).

TAC §228.35(f) states that supervision of each candidate shall be conducted with the structured guidance and regular ongoing support of an experienced educator who has been trained as a field supervisor. A total of twelve (12) field supervisors were assigned to the candidates within the program. Training consisted of a retreat and handbook that defines roles and responsibilities, review of forms, and observation skills. The retreat is conducted each year. The attendance was verified by sign-in sheets. Additionally, field supervisors sign a letter of agreement and confidentiality. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.35(f).

Initial candidate contact by the field supervisor was made within the first three weeks of their assignment as required by TAC §228.35(f). The field supervisors go out to the school and provide a non-assessed walk-through for the first contact. Documentation of first contact was found in the candidates' records and field supervisor logs for the 2012-2013 cohort.

The four observations (three required by TAC) [TAC §228.35(f)(4)] conducted during clinical teaching and internship must be at least 45 minutes in duration [TAC §228.35(f)] and the first observation must be conducted within the first six weeks of clinical teaching or internship. The observation forms, signed by the teaching candidate and field supervisor, as well as the field supervisor's contact log, provided evidence that the program met the requirements. The observation form reflected the start and stop time of the observation.

TAC §228.35(f) requires that the field supervisors document observed instructional practices and provide written feedback through an interactive conference with the candidates. The dated observation forms served as evidence that the field supervisor documented observed instructional practices and provided an interactive conference following the observation. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.35(f).

ACT - RGV is required to provide a copy of the written feedback to the candidate's campus administrator [TAC §228.35(f)]. Written feedback of the observation was provided to the campus administrator was found in candidates' folders. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.35(f).

Evidence of additional informal observations and coaching was requested. Emails between program staff, field supervisors, and candidates served as evidence that additional observations and/or coaching occurred. The program met the requirements as specified in TAC §228.35(f).

Based on evidence presented, ACT – Rio Grande Valley is 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:

ACT - RGV has a candidate assessment and benchmarking process as prescribed by TAC §228.40(a). Evidence provided included specific benchmarks on a tracking system for each candidate.

Instructional module assessments are used throughout the entire curriculum. There are quizzes to assess content knowledge of the curriculum and educational tasks/activities to assess the

ability to implement the knowledge. Many of the task/activity assessments are scored with rubrics that allow candidate corrections if products did not meet standards. It was recommended that assessments clearly mark the success of the acquisition of the content presented by instructors and clearly delineate the difference between each candidate's successes. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.40(a).

According to TAC §228.40(b), the program shall not grant test approval for the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities test until the candidate has met all the requirements for admission to the program and has been fully accepted into the educator preparation program. Readiness for testing [TAC §228.40(b)] was determined by the program after a candidate attended test preparation sessions. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.40(b).

Evaluation of the program's design and delivery of the curriculum should be continuous per TAC §228.40(c). Information such as candidate exit surveys, test pass rates, and workshop evaluations were collected for evaluation by the program. ACT - RGV met the requirements of TAC §228.40(c).

According to TAC §228.40(d), an educator preparation program shall retain documents that evidence a candidate's eligibility for admission to the program and evidence of completion of all program requirements for a period of five years after program completion. The program kept records for the past five years in both electronic and paper formats. The records were securely stored in locked cabinets in locked offices. The retention of records met the requirements of TAC §228.40(d).

Based on evidence presented, ACT – Rio Grande Valley 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). The program curriculum addressed the Code of Ethics in courses provided by ACT - RGV. In addition, each candidate and staff member signed a statement verifying that they read and understood the Educator's Code of Ethics. Candidate documentation was found in the 2012-2013 records. The program met the requirements of TAC §228.50(a) and TAC §228.30(b)(2).

Based on evidence presented, ACT – Rio Grande Valley is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.50 – Professional Conduct.

Current Accreditation Status

ACT - RGV is currently rated “Accredited” based on the September 1, 2010 - August 31, 2011 accountability ratings.

Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

Pass Rate Performance:	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	70% Standard I	75% Standard I	80% Standard I
Overall:	99%	98%	93%

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Compliance Actions are based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency compliance audit visit. If the program is out of compliance with any component, consult the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. 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.

Other recommendations are suggestions for program improvement only. **Compliance Actions:** In order to meet requirements of Texas Administrative Code governing educator preparation programs, the following actions shall be implemented immediately:

Component I: Governance of Educator Preparation Programs:

- TAC §228.20(b): ... shall assist in the **design**, delivery, **evaluation**, and major policy decisions of the educator preparation program... represents stakeholders
- TAC §228.35(d) An educator preparation entity shall provide evidence on-going and relevant **field-based experiences** as determined by the advisory committee as specified in §228.20
 - **ACT-RGV shall request assistance and input from Advisory Committee members with regard to design of curriculum, program evaluation, and field based experiences; document the input in meetings minutes.**

Component II: Admission Criteria:

- TAC §227.10(a)(3)(B) This exception to the minimum GPA requirement will be granted by the program director only in extraordinary circumstances and may not be used by a program to admit more than 10% of any cohort of candidates

- **Provide documentation in candidate's records of reason(s) for allowing admission into program with a GPA under the 2.5 minimum.**

Component III: Educator Preparation Curriculum:

- TAC §228.30 (a) The educator standards shall be the curricular basis for all educator preparation
- **Changing admission criterion to require successful Pre-Admission Content Test in certification field.**

General Recommendations for ACT-RGV

- Continue to follow the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and the State Board of Education (SBOE) meetings and/or review the minutes to ensure that the program staff is knowledgeable about current Texas Administrative Code;
- Participate in Annual Deans/Directors Meetings to ensure that the program director is knowledgeable about current Texas Administrative Code and future changes to Texas Administrative Code (Webinar Series);
- Continue to participate in webinars provided by the Division of Educator Certification & Standards to ensure that the program staff is knowledgeable about current requirements and changes in Texas Administrative Code;
- Continue to maintain communication with the program specialist assigned to the program for the purpose of asking questions about current requirements in TAC for Governance; Admissions; Curriculum; Program Delivery & On-Going Support; and Program Evaluation (TAC § 227-229).
- Align the verbiage of the program to that of current Texas Administrative Code. For example: Applicant / Candidate / Field Supervisor / Internship / Clinical Teacher
- Ensure that the Dean/Director/Program Staff utilizes the EPP Staff Information page <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/eppinfo.aspx> to access pertinent information that EPP's frequently request.
- Ensure that TEA staff has the most current & up-to-date contact information by sending an email to victoria.ellis@tea.state.tx.us as well as notifying the program specialist assigned.

General Recommendations by Component

Component I: Governance of Educator Preparation Programs:

- Expand the advisory committee to include more members from stakeholder groups;
- Ensure that new members are trained since the membership of the advisory committee is on-going,
- Continue to implement the process of holding two advisory committee meetings per year and maintain the invitations, agendas, minutes, and sign-in sheets as evidence that the meetings have occurred; and
- Consider utilizing an advisory committee meeting template to ensure that required TAC items are covered at each of the two meetings per year (an academic year is from September 1-August 31 of a specified year) and take notes of specific topics and AC members input;

Component II: Admission Criteria:

- Consider interviewing candidates and utilize a rubric to ensure objectivity in evaluating the interview questions for all applicants to the program and maintain the rubric along with the questions in each applicant's file (verbal skills are an important element in teaching and that skill set should be evaluated prior to admissions)
- Consider a FERPA agreement for providing campus administrator observation information and possible test information disclosure when discussing candidate's qualifications.

Component III: Educator Preparation Curriculum:

- Consider creating a uniform template for all course module syllabi that contains the following: Educator Standards, TEKS, goals and objectives for each course, assessments, and additional requirements for each course offered that leads to certification within the certification program; and
- Add rigor and depth to the curriculum to ensure alignment to the 17 topics per TAC §228.30(b) by creating assessments per course that objectively define success or failure of the acquired knowledge of the 17 topics taught; and
- Ensure that reading instruction is provided for all certification areas, regardless of whether or not the program is a traditional undergraduate or alternative certification program.

- Utilize the TEA developed training for meeting “Teachers’ Responsibilities for the STAAR test administration at <http://texas.testsecuritytraining.com/TestAdministratorTraining.aspx>. It may be used for a whole group or individually. A certificate can be printed upon completion. This is the same training that teachers must complete prior to STAAR testing.
- Utilize the dyslexia information found on the TEA website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=4434> or at <http://www.region10.org/dyslexia/>.

Component IV: Program Delivery and On-Going Support:

- Consider utilizing the T-CERT test preparation to determine the readiness of each candidate to take the appropriate TExES exam and ensure that the program maintains the certificate of completion verifying (6) clock-hours of test preparation that is not embedded in any other curriculum areas - or create another indicator for test prep not embedded in any other curriculum areas and ensure that the program maintains the certificate of completion verifying (6) clock-hours of test preparation. The T-CERT address is <https://pact.tarleton.edu/TCERT> and for questions email weiss@Tarleton.edu

Component V: Program Evaluation:

- Consider Performance-based assessments scored on a rubric for each of the modules required for candidates seeking certification and keep the documentation in case a dispute of success is questioned.
- Add additional external input on the evaluation of the program; i.e. principals, HR Directors, and cooperating teachers/mentors.

Component VI: Professional Conduct:

- Consider utilizing the TEA approved Ethics training for both candidates and staff within the program to ensure that this topic is adequately addressed by the program & maintain evidence that that the training has occurred. For more information visit <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ethics/>