



Compliance Report for Texas College in Tyler, Texas September 28-29, 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 technical assistance visit for the traditional undergraduate and the post-baccalaureate educator certification programs at Texas College in Tyler, Texas, was conducted on September 28-29, 2010 by Texas Education Agency (TEA) Program Specialists Dr. Mary S. Black and Mr. Mixon Henry in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10 (c).

This technical assistance visit concentrated on areas found to be out of compliance through a desk audit in Summer 2009 by TEA: Component I Governance or Advisory Committee; and Component IV Program Delivery and Support. In addition, Component II Admission Criteria, Component III Curriculum and Component V Program Evaluation were reviewed September 28-29, 2010, due to poor certification examination performance for the past four years.

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code rules governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A review of documents, syllabi, and a curriculum correlation chart provided evidence regarding compliance. A self-report was submitted to TEA by Texas College on August 31, 2010. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation were used to evaluate the evidence.

The Opening Session September 28, 2010 was attended by 19 people, including the president of the College, Dr. Dwight J. Fennell. A cross section of the college faculty attended. Rev. Orenthia Mason, Chair of the Division of Education, Octavia Brown, Director of Teacher Education, the chairs of the divisions of Natural and Computational Sciences, Business and Social Science, and Humanities and General Studies also attended as well as area coordinators for the college in physical education and criminal justice. Six other members of the Advisory Committee representing area school districts and the local business community also attended.

Seventeen people attended the Closing Session September 29, 2010, including the president of Texas College, Dr. Dwight J. Fennell, the vice-president for academic affairs, Dr. Johnnye Jones, chair of the division of education, Rev.

Mason, and the director of the teacher preparation program, Octavia Brown. Mary S. Black and Mixon Henry presented preliminary findings from the visit and gave verbal recommendations for improvement. In consultation with Dr. Janice Lopez, Director of Educator Standards at the Texas Education Agency (TEA), it was decided to write a memorandum of understanding outlining improvements to be made within the next 12-months. All four administrators named above signed the document, and Dr. Mary S. Black signed on behalf of TEA. A copy of the memorandum is included with this report. TEA plans to re-visit Texas College in one year to validate that the program is in compliance with all Texas Administrative Code rules.

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

Findings:

The advisory committee has been reconstituted recently. Minutes from the November 17, 2009 and the September 28, 2010 meeting were available. The committee consists of 15 members for 2010-2011, including 7 from local schools and districts, 5 representing local business and community groups, and 3 from other divisions of the college. Therefore the membership is balanced and represents a variety of stakeholders. Mary S. Black presented advisory committee training to the group September 28, 2010.

Texas Administrative Code 228.20 (b) mandates that advisory committees for education preparation programs meet twice every academic year. Based on the minutes available, Texas College did not meet this requirement during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Based on the evidence presented above, Texas College is in not compliance with TAC §228.20.

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

Findings:

Admission criteria for 2009-2010 are posted on the Texas College website under the Division of Education. Revised admission criteria for 2010-2011 are not yet available online. For 2009-2010 a Nelson-Denny Reading test with at least a 10th grade score was required for admission to teacher preparation, but that requirement has been dropped for 2010-2011. Also a minimum grade point average of 2.7 was required in 2009-2010, but that has been dropped to the state minimum of 2.5 for 2010-2011. A new interview protocol for admission with a rubric was being developed during the monitoring visit. No evidence was seen of interviews in the past, but the program indicated verbally that such interviews were conducted. A review of all 18 current student folders (both undergraduate and post-bac) demonstrated that all students had submitted an application to the teaching program and that all students meet Texas Success Initiative requirements for basic skills. Out-of-country applicant folders also showed the required review of credentials for foreign universities. All post-bac

candidates were admitted with GPAs of 2.5 or above. However, two of nine undergraduate candidates had been admitted with less than a 2.5 GPA. TAC 227.10 (A) requires that all educator preparation candidates must have at least a 2.5 GPA to enter an educator preparation program. TAC 227.10 (3)(b) allows an exception of 10% of each entering cohort that can be admitted with less than a 2.5 GPA. Two students out of nine is more than 10%, therefore, Texas College does not meet this rule.

Based on the evidence presented above, Texas College is not in compliance with TAC §227.10.

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

Findings:

Most syllabi for courses in the Division of Education contain the standards, domains and competencies from the TExES framework that are taught in that course. A cross-sample of syllabi from other divisions also contained pertinent domains and competencies. An effort is being made across the college to align curriculum for educator preparation candidates for all certificate areas. A matrix showing where each of the 17 mandated topics from TAC 228.30 are taught was completed by Rev. Mason during the visit. A matrix to show the correlation of Generalist EC-6 standards and coursework that was sent to the program on August 9, 2010, was not available.

One course, Foundations of the Teaching Profession, was taught online in Spring 2009, but has returned to a face-to-face format for Fall 2010. No other online courses are available.

All 19 folders of current students contained a signed affidavit affirming adherence to the Texas Educator's Code of Ethics, TAC §247.2.

TEKS are covered in subject-area courses in other divisions of the college, as well as in EDUC 431101/431201 and one course numbered EDUC 2323 with no course title on the syllabus, taught by Octavia Brown September 2, 2010 through October 7, 2010. Apparently three different courses have the number EDUC 2323, as three very different syllabi with that number were presented as evidence for the Texas College curriculum. One EDUC 2323 is a Human Development course taught by Orenthia Mason. Another is a Human Development course taught by Octavia Brown. The third course "offers a systematic review of the domains with the accompanying competencies for each domain in a TExES test framework," and therefore may be a test preparation course.

Confusion appears in the degree plans for each certification area. It is unclear whether all candidates for each certification field are being provided instruction in all required topics in TAC 228.30. For example, the degree plans for candidates in the English, Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) 4-8, History 8-12, all-level physical education and Math 8-12 all omit child development. The degree plan for candidates in Science 4-8 shows that child development and educational technology and media are both omitted from their plan. In contrast, Art EC-12, Music EC-12, and Social Studies 8-12 all list Human Growth and Development and Educational Technology and Media on the degree plans.

Reading instruction for all candidates is another area of confusion. The degree plan for Math 8-12 indicates these candidates must take three reading courses: Fundamentals of Reading Instruction, Reading and Other Language Arts, and Reading in the Content Area. Degree plans for ELAR 8-12 and 4-8 only indicate two reading courses: Reading and Other Language Arts and Reading in the Content Area. The degree plan for Science 8-12 indicates one reading course, Reading in the Content Area. Music EC-12 requires one reading course, Reading in the Content Area, but Art EC-12 requires a different course, Reading and the Language Arts. All level Physical Education requires both of these reading courses.

The Generalist EC-6 emphasis degree plan indicates these candidates must take five reading and language development courses: Developing Language Skills of Young Children, Reading in the Content Areas, Individualized and Recreational Reading of Children's Literature, Reading and Other Language Arts, and Fundamentals of Reading Instruction.

TAC 338.30(b) requires that reading instruction be provided for candidates in all certification fields, as well as instructional technology and other topics.

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

A new benchmarking plan to track student progress was developed by Rev. Mason in Summer 2010. Level I-A requires students to identify themselves as possible teacher-candidates. Level II-B requires candidates to attend TExES orientation and make passing scores on the THEA. Level II requires students to successfully complete two pre-requisite courses, Foundations of the Teaching Profession and Understanding Diversity in Education. Level III includes application to the educator preparation program during the junior year, 120 hours of field-based observation, successful completion of six courses in the Division of Education, application for the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities examination, and application to student teaching. In Level IV, candidates complete student teaching and the Capstone for the Teaching Profession course. They also apply to take the TExES content exam and apply for graduation. After they received the degree, candidates apply for standard certification. This plan is included in the handbook for the educator preparation program which all candidates received in Fall 2010. A checklist for these items is also included on page 15 of the handbook, but it does not match the elaboration on pages 16-17.

TAC 228.35 (a) (6) requires programs to provide evidence of criteria for allowing certain previous experiences, such as recent substitute teaching or work as a teacher's aide, to substitute for some field-based experience. No documentation about this was available.

Based on the degree plans, all candidates complete more than the state minimum of 300 clock hours of coursework and training prior to certification. According to the

Program Hours chart completed by Texas College prior to the monitoring visit, candidates complete 120 clock-hours of field-based experience and observation prior to student teaching or internship. Rev. Mason said that six clock-hours of test preparation were embedded throughout the coursework. However, EDUC 2323 from September 2, 2010 to October 7, 2010 taught by Octavia Brown also appears to be a test preparation course. A review of the Generalist EC-6 emphasis degree plan with Dr. Johnnye Jones, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, revealed that candidates following this degree plan would take a total of 765 clock-hours of preparation for certification, not including the 120 additional clock-hours of field-based experience, student teaching or internship.

In the past a scale for awarding hours of observation credit to candidates who may be working in a “variety of school-related services” was used to award credit for field-based experience hours. Texas College requires 120 field-based experience hours, much more than the 30 minimum clock-hours mandated by TAC §228.35 (d) (1). No definition of “school-related services” was found, but it appears from the scale that candidates working at certain jobs in schools may have done no other field-based observations.

Evidence in student folders revealed that some students had been exempted from student teaching in the past. All administrators involved, Dr. Fennell, Dr. Jones, Rev. Mason, and Ms. Brown gave verbal assurance that that is no longer the case. Student teaching is now a 14-week experience in local schools. A handbook that was personally delivered to all cooperating teachers in Fall 2010 by Rev. Mason contains information on mentoring and cooperating teacher training materials. Four members of the Division of Education faculty at Texas College serve as field supervisors. A handbook also provides them with information about observing and evaluating students during student teaching. The field supervisor for each candidate accompanied him or her to the first day of student teaching to introduce the candidate to the cooperating teacher in Fall 2010. The first observation is conducted within the first six weeks of the candidate’s assignment. All juniors and seniors in the program received a new student handbook in Fall 2010.

Observation forms document field supervisor observation and evaluation of student teachers in Fall 2010. Only scattered observation documentation is available for previous years. Observation forms did not list time in/time out for each observation, but a new form has already been created that will note that. No evidence could be found that field supervisors gave copies of the observation form to campus administrators in previous years, as required by TAC §228.35 (f). No evidence of informal observation and coaching by field supervisors in previous years was found. A new walk-through observation form has been created in Fall 2010 to document these aspects.

Based on the evidence presented above, Texas College is not in compliance with TAC §228.35.

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

Findings:

Benchmarks for student progress, as required in TAC 228.40(a), have been described above. Syllabi list assessments for all courses. To determine candidate’s readiness to

test, pre-tests for the TExES examinations were administered to candidates in Fall 2010. Approval to take the TExES is only granted after admission to the program and completion of required coursework.

To evaluate curriculum, student course evaluations are collected each semester. Testing data from ETS is also referenced. No other course or overall program evaluation material was in evidence. In conversation with Dr. Johnnye Jones, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, no plan for overall program evaluation could be discovered. The advisory committee has not been involved in program evaluation according to available minutes from meetings.

A lack of student folders for previous years reveals that required materials have not been maintained for the five years required in TAC. §228.40 (d).

Based on the evidence presented above, Texas College is not in compliance with TAC §228.40.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Compliance Recommendations are based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency technical assistance visit. 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: In order to come into compliance with all Texas Administrative Code rule governing educator preparation programs, the following recommendations are made:

- Meet with the advisory committee at least twice every academic year.
- Maintain minutes, agendas and sign-in sheets from advisory committee meetings as evidence of compliance.
- Involve the advisory committee in evaluation of curriculum and overall program effectiveness.
- Follow the 10% rule in TAC. §227.10 (3) (b) regarding GPA for admission.
- Align all coursework with standards, domains and competencies.
- Ensure that all candidates have instruction in the 17 topics mandated in TAC §228.30.
- Provide a minimum of 6 clock-hours of stand-alone test preparation (i.e. not embedded throughout various courses).
- Provide evidence of criteria for allowing certain previous experiences to substitute for some field-based experience.
- Do not allow exemptions from student teaching.
- Ensure that every candidate completes a minimum of 12-weeks of full-day student teaching.
- Add time-in/time-out on all field observation forms. Each formal observation must be a minimum of 45 minutes.
- Keep completed observation forms with comments and evidence of communication with candidate in student folders.

- Provide a copy of each candidate observation to the campus administrator.
- Provide evidence of any informal coaching or observations by the field supervisors.
- Develop a comprehensive, annual method of curriculum and overall program evaluation which involves the advisory committee.
- Maintain all student records for a minimum of five years.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Review all degree plans for educator preparation students for redundancy and alignment with required topics in TAC §228.30.
- Consider creating a combined arts course (music, art, theater) to fulfill the requirements for the Generalist EC-6 certificate emphasis.
- Consider creating a course on special populations that includes teaching strategies for special education students, English language learners and gifted and talented students in the regular classroom.
- Consider recommending candidates for the TExES content exam by the end of their junior year.
- Consider recommending candidates for the PPR exam by the end of their student teaching experience.
- Consider requiring fewer field-based observation hours in order to reduce the load on candidates (30 field-based clock-hours are required by TAC §228).
- Track all students' progress each semester to maintain a clear understanding of each candidate's standing.
- Provide adequate support for the Division of Education during the next 12-months to ensure their ability to comply with all TAC rules by September, 2010.