



Compliance Visit Report 2009-2010 Midwestern State University

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

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Sandra Nix, Program Specialist, and Annabel Pena, Program Specialist, conducted a Texas Education Agency continuing approval visit on March 23 and 24, 2010. The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date Self-Report Submitted: February 22, 2010

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

Findings:

Midwestern State University (MSU) is in compliance with Texas Administration Code §228.20. The advisory committee consists of 13 voting members: one from a school district, ten from higher education, one from an education service center, and one from business and community. The increased number of University Deans serving on the committee provides collaboration among the various content disciplines that offer preparation for various teacher certificates. The advisory committee meets the requirements in TAC §228.20(b), however, the teacher education program would benefit from increased depth of membership from the school districts such as mentor teachers and human resource directors, and from the communities that it serves.

Meetings are held five times per year. Meetings were conducted on August 18, October 12, 2009 and January 12, March 23, April 13, 2010. An additional advisory committee meeting date in May is reserved if an additional meeting is necessary. Agendas, minutes and attendance records were available during the document review as evidence of compliance for all meetings. In reviewing the minutes, it was found how applicants for admission to candidacy were reviewed and approved, demographic changes in the area were discussed, and changes and additions to the program content were discussed. However, no records of evaluative data or of field-based experiences could be located as required by TAC §228.20(e).

Seven out of 13 advisory committee members responded to the questionnaire sent by TEA. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the responding committee members indicated they had served on the advisory committee for more than five years. The members also indicated that they were well versed in their roles and responsibilities. Because of the importance of the advisory committee's contributions, it is suggested to provide training annually and to develop a handbook to help guide the activities and responsibilities of the committee.

Based on responses from the advisory committee members on how they have influenced the program, the members indicated that they approved any changes to the entrance or exit requirements, participated in the decision to increase student teaching from 12 to 14 weeks, and approved altering the curriculum content or hours. The West College of Education Policy Handbook states that "program coordinators will form and meet with a program advisory council at least once a year. Advisory councils will provide pertinent perspectives and input regarding program evaluation." The advisory committee members indicated that they were involved in program evaluation.

In discussions with the Dean, Dr. Grant Simpson, it was discovered that in addition to the general advisory committee, each division, such as Special Education, has their own advisory committee that provides input into policies, program development, and evaluation.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 228.20 - GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM. In light of the findings detailed above, Midwestern State University is in compliance.

Commendations:

Midwestern State University is commended for having five or more advisory committee meetings per year.

Midwestern State University is commended for having Deans of other colleges sit on the advisory committee in order to provide an interdisciplinary approach for teacher preparation.

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

Findings:

Midwestern State University (MSU) is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227.10- Admission Requirements.

Per the West College of Education Policy Manual and the self-report, in order to be admitted into the Teacher Education Program, the candidate must complete a disposition assessment with a pre-philosophy paper, complete the School and Society Course and a Computer Applications Course, have an overall GPA of 2.75 , a GPA of 2.5 in freshman English, have satisfactory scores on the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA), completed 60 hours of coursework, and submit three letters of recommendation. An application, which must be signed, was available among the document review items.

It is mandatory that all candidates participate in a speech and language screening at no cost to the candidate. Assessment instruments were presented for both English and non-native speaking candidates. Candidates must achieve an acceptable score prior to student teaching. Under some circumstances, speech therapy may continue during the student teaching practicum. Midwestern State University also utilizes the TOEFL to determine English language proficiency of out-of-country students.

Midwestern State University disseminates MSU information to potential candidates through the advisory committee members, website, catalogue, career fairs, school and community college visits, brochures and various media outlets. For example, the University is involved in a major marketing campaign called "Million Dollar Conversation." This program focuses on the awareness that if a candidate continues his/her education past high school graduation, there is the potential to earn a million dollars in a lifetime. In addition, MSU has three federal grants that recruit teachers, all of which include extensive mentoring, mentor training, funds for substitutes, stipends for mentors, and technology for both mentors and student teachers. Through Project BOW (Bilingual/ESL Opportunities Window, a collaboration with Region IX Education Service Center and Wichita Falls ISD (WFISD), interested candidates who are motivated to meet the needs of the Hispanic students are recruited. Project BOW provides tuition grants up to \$3000 a year. During the document review, TEA reviewed samples of recruiting materials.

Sufficient evidence exists that admission criteria are applied in an equitable manner for all candidates. The MSU College of Education indicated that 5% or less of entering candidates have been admitted under the 10% cohort rule per TAC §227.10.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA. In light of the findings detailed above, Midwestern State University is in compliance.

Commendations:

Midwestern State University is commended for requiring a higher grade point average (2.7) than required by rule for admission into the educator preparation program.

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

Findings:

Midwestern University is in compliance with TAC §228.30 Educator Preparation Curriculum.

The full time faculty consists of 26 professors, one Dean and six (6) support staff members. The 24 faculty vitas presented for credential review indicated that 22 had doctor's degrees and two (2) had master's degrees. Furthermore, 13 were certified Texas teachers and six (6) were certified teachers from other states.

One hundred percent of the student teachers indicated in the questionnaire administered by TEA that they were provided a clear and concise course syllabus. In reviewing the available

course syllabi, it was found that consistent and common components were included in all. These, among others, included instructor information, content descriptions, goals, objectives, TEKS (if applicable), field-based experiences guidelines, classroom policies, and grading criteria.

According to the faculty questionnaire administered by TEA, one hundred percent (100%) of the faculty responding indicated that class discussion was the method that the faculty was encouraged to use in providing instruction to the teaching candidates. The use of case studies, cooperative learning groups, and modeling of instructional strategies followed closely at ninety-three percent (93%).

One of the innovations being developed at MSU is “Day in the Life of a Teacher” virtual world assessments. Students create an avatar, enter the teaching environment, and respond to rapid fire, “real world” classroom occurrences. The student chooses responses from pull down menus or responds to open-ended questions, and is asked to justify his/her decisions. In the initial analysis, it is evident that the anecdotal responses extracted the underlying values and beliefs of the students. Results from assessments will be used in planning for and adjusting class experiences, and in some cases, for counseling students.

Coverage of the 17 curriculum topics were confirmed through the self-report, student teacher responses, as well as through the course correlations required by TEA. When asked through the TEA administered questionnaire how effective instruction was of the 17 TAC required curriculum topics, the student teachers responded that instruction in the following areas was extremely effective: using TEKS in the content area (50%); how to develop a lesson (60%); how to use a variety of classroom assessments (55%); and using a variety of instructional strategies in the classroom (50%). Areas that students would like to see more emphasis placed were: teacher’s responsibilities for administering the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills examination (45%); how to use formative assessments to diagnose student learning needs (25%); standards and teaching strategies for students with limited English speaking proficiency (37%); and conducting parent conferences (20%). From the questionnaires administered to the cooperating teachers, they indicated that they would like to see more observation opportunities in order for the candidate to discover more about child development prior to student teaching, more classroom management preparation, and better content preparation. However, eighty percent (80%) of the cooperating teachers felt that the teaching candidates were well prepared in the area of instructional technology.

Thirty-six percent (36%) of the student teachers responding to the questionnaire reported that they were not aware of any type of assistance that was available to prepare them for the TExES test other than a practice PPR test. In review of the clock hour chart, it was discovered that prior to January 1, 2010, preparation for the TExES exam was embedded in the education courses. Because verification of actual time spent in test preparation was difficult in this format, test preparation is now placed in three separate courses where actual time can be verified. Even though this modification has been made, a free-standing test preparation training session should be developed and delivered to ensure candidate success on the TExES test.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM. In light of the findings detailed above, Midwestern State University is in compliance.

Commendations:

Midwestern State University is commended for its creative and advanced development of future teaching technology environments.

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

Midwestern State University is in compliance with TAC §228.35 Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training.

The program is delivered primarily in a face-to-face format. The total hours for an elementary certificate are 600 clock hours while the hours for a secondary certificate are 375 clock hours. There are 555 clock hours of course work prior to elementary student teaching and 375 clock hours prior to secondary student teaching. In addition, each student completes the 30 hours of gifted and talented training provided by participating school districts.

MSU requires a minimum of 45 hours of field experience. However, since many of the field based experiences are embedded in actual courses in Block I and II, many more hours of field based experiences are logged. According to the self-report and student teacher responses, time logs, reflective journals and class discussions are used to reinforce field-based experiences.

The University has 26 field supervisors located throughout the state. Some University faculty members also serve in this capacity. Since a percentage of student teaching is conducted at sites away from Wichita Falls, field supervisors are hired accordingly to assist specific student teachers. All field supervisors are certified teachers with many years of public school service. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the field supervisors indicated that they had been involved in field supervision for more than three years. Twenty-six percent (26%) indicated that they had served as field supervisors for more than six years. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the student teachers reported that the field supervisors were effective or very effective. However, the mentor teachers indicated that they would like more communication with the field supervisors. One hundred percent (100%) of the principals indicated that they had received written or verbal feedback about the student teachers from the field supervisors.

The field supervisors indicated in the questionnaire administered by TEA that they receive an orientation from MSU yearly. Copies of agendas and attendance records verified field supervisor training was held on August 14, 2009 and January 4, 2010 and a mentoring workshop in September 2009. In addition, the field supervisors were provided a Reference Guide for Observing and Assessing Student Teachers in specific content areas. Other available training material included a PowerPoint on mentoring and instructions for use of the TK20, a computer data gathering software system.

Cooperating teachers reported that training is provided through an orientation from MSU (56%) and a handbook or manual (92%). The Student Teaching Handbook outlines the responsibilities

of the cooperating teacher as well as those for the student teacher. An agenda and plan for a cooperating teacher training and luncheon was provided for 2008. It is recommended that this opportunity be continued to support cooperating teachers. Cooperative agreements for student teachers were presented between various school districts and MSU in the document review.

Per responses from the student teachers and cooperating teachers in their questionnaires, first contact with the student teachers was made within the first three weeks. This was done during field supervisor's training on the above mentioned dates. In reviewing the student folders, six formal observations were verified. Student teachers and their mentors confirmed that formal observations were 45 minutes or more in duration followed by an interactive conference. However, the time written on the actual observation forms indicated a range of 20 minutes to an hour and a half. The observation forms were very general in nature and the powerfulness of the document would be increased if it were more focused on specific aspects of the teaching process or tied to the Teacher Work Sample document. It was very difficult to determine who conducted the observation and completed the form. The observation forms were not signed by the candidate or the field supervisor. A compiled Student Evaluation Report by the cooperating teacher, field supervisor, and the candidate was completed at the end of the first seven weeks and at the end of the student teaching experience. The signature of the evaluators was found on these records but no signature of the teaching candidate or cooperating teacher. It is recommended that the program review the overall student teacher supervision process, especially the observation forms and processes, in order to maximize the effect of the student teaching experience and to ensure consistent compliance with TAC rule §228.35.

Students who are struggling in the program may receive speech and language screening and therapy as a free service. The speech therapist must report adequate progress prior to a student moving into the student teaching phase of the program. It possible for a student to continue speech therapy while student teaching. In addition, students who are displaying problematic behaviors are subject to a "Fitness Alert". If a student receives two notices, the student must meet with the Faculty Review Committee to discuss options and to develop a growth plan. The student may also be referred to the MSU counseling center. If the behavior persists, the student may be denied student teaching or be dismissed from the educator preparation program. Several resume writing courses are offered for student teachers in order to prepare them for the job fairs which are held in the area.

Compliance status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK AND/OR TRAINING. In light of the findings detailed above, Midwestern State University is in compliance.

Commendations:

Midwestern State University is commended for requiring a minimum of 45 clock hours of field experiences for their candidates prior to student teaching.

Midwestern State University is commended for requiring Speech and Language Assessment and corrective therapy, if necessary, at no cost to all teaching candidates.

Midwestern State University is commended for requiring 14 weeks of student teaching rather than the state minimum of 12 weeks.

Midwestern State University is commended for requiring six (6) formal observations of the student teachers.

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

Findings:

Midwestern State University is in compliance with TAC §228.40 Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

Midwestern State University verifies student teaching progress by requiring the production of a Teacher Work Sample project. The Teacher Work Sample involves developing a teaching unit that focuses on considering factors, learning goals, assessment plan, design for instruction, instructional decision making, analysis of student learning, and reflection and self-evaluation. Each project is evaluated by two faculty members using a grading rubric and the project must receive a rating of “2” or better to pass the student teaching course.

Students in the Generalist EC-6 program have required field experiences in the School and Society course, early childhood coursework, and in the three semesters of blocked courses that are taught in the cooperating professional learning schools within Wichita Falls and Burkburnett ISDs. Students are assigned to classrooms for the entire semester. In the first block, students complete observations, mentoring, and tutoring assignments with individuals and small groups of students. They learn the mechanics of lesson planning and preparing IEPs. In the second block, students plan, deliver, and reflect on lessons in science, mathematics, and social studies. They receive feedback both from their professors and the cooperating teachers. The third block is focused on student teaching. The students not only teach lessons, they also must submit an integrated thematic unit as a summative product. All coursework is aligned with state, national, and NCATE standards.

Each course has developed a series of evaluation criteria. The results of these assessment items are entered into the TK20 system. The information generated from this system can be disaggregated in many ways: by male/female, ethnic group, and so forth. This information is used for course evaluation and modification as well as student progress. A report on an individual student’s progress can be generated as an overall look at the student’s progress. In addition, students must successfully complete the requirements from Block I in order to advance to the Block 2 courses and then to the Block 3 courses.

The candidates’ readiness to test for the content area and PPR is determined by successful completion of a practice test, course grades, and completion of the program requirements. Students are allowed to begin the testing process when they are within their last academic year. Students in secondary fields must obtain approval from their respective department chair of the content area before being approved to initiate testing. The ASEP data for the past three years indicate an initial and final pass rate between 80-100 percent.

Program and curriculum evaluation is conducted on an ongoing basis with input from major stakeholders. Information is gathered through surveys from students in various certification programs, cooperating teachers, and advisory committee members. Students complete assessments of standards that are recorded in TK20 (a data software system). Faculty analyzes and use the reports generated by TK20 in planning, monitoring, and adapting instruction for differentiated needs. In addition, follow up studies are conducted by sending employers of teachers who graduated from MSU a survey to evaluate the teacher's preparation and effectiveness.

Student records are kept in both paper and electronic formats for five years in a secure environment. The record keeping supplied in the document review was complete and well organized. A Student Teacher Assignment by Student database contained information such as school and grade assignment, placement schools, principal, cooperating teacher, field supervisor, and dates assigned to the school. The database could be enhanced by including field-based experience information and formal observation dates and information. This addition would provide a total portrait of the student at one glance as he/she progresses through the program.

Compliance Status for Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section 228.40 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT. In light of the findings detailed above, Midwestern State University is in compliance.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency Visit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any component, please consult the TAC rules and initiate actions to correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A progress report will be required in one year on Compliance Recommendations.

General program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement and do not require follow-up.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: A Progress Report will be required in one year.

None at this time.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.

- Align terminology with Texas Administration Code (TAC) definitions.
- Increase the Advisory Committee membership to include more members representing the school districts and the community.

- Provide Advisory Committee training yearly.
- Develop and provide an Advisory Committee handbook to reinforce roles and responsibilities and to emphasize the importance of the committee's involvement.
- Review the field supervision process and forms to maximize its effectiveness and ensure compliance with TAC §228.35.