

**Texas Education Agency
Division of Educator Standards
Post Approval Site Visit
Education Service Center Region XII
Nolanville, Texas
March 31-April 1, 2009**

**Visit Conducted by TEA Staff:
Mixon Henry and Dr. Mary Black, Program Specialists**

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(b) Educator Preparation Program Approval Process

Background

The Alternative Certification Program at Education Service Center (ESC) Region XII started in 1993 and currently has two training sites: Waco and Nolanville, Texas. Region XII collaborates with 77 school districts, 11 charter or private schools, and various school districts out of the region to prepare new teachers. On the date of this visit, there were 48 interns, with an expected doubling of enrollment by April 7, 2009, when the new session begins. Region XII did extensive advertising in November, 2008 to attract new students, highlighted their high success on TExES examinations. In 2007, only the category "Other" had lower than a 94% pass rate on all tests combined. "Other" scored 83%. As of today, ESC Region XII is approved in 46 certification areas.

The Region XII ACP program serves many working adults, particularly at the Nolanville campus, which is near Ft. Hood Army Base. Region XII students tend to be highly mobile, and thus the clinical teaching model which Region XII uses in addition to the internship model, is often the practicum of choice. The Region also provides Intervention Specialists for extra observation and coaching as necessary. In addition, the Region brings in nationally-known consultants who spend all day and evening working with interns several times a year.

Twelve (12) people attended the Opening Session, including five (5) persons from local school districts, and seven (7) people from ESC Region XII.

Prior to the TEA visit, ESC Region XII submitted a self-report which addressed all required components. This entity is rated accredited in ASEP by the Texas Education Agency. Program specialists from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Mixon Henry and Dr. Mary Black, provided a framework for the visit, discussing the proposed two-day agenda format and rules compliance. Ms. Donna Trigg and Dr. Wynn Rolf met with the TEA team for a clarification meeting to allow everyone to ask and answer questions regarding aspects of the visit, including items on the Self-Report and information gathered during interviews. Finally, the closing session was led by the TEA team, who provided a preliminary oral briefing to share the findings, commendations, and recommendations.

Number and Roles of People Interviewed

Twenty-four (24) people were interviewed by the program specialists, including five (5) Advisory Council members, three (3) directors or faculty, eight (8) interns, five (5) mentors, one (1) principal, and two (2) program staff.

I. Entity Commitment and Collaboration

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – Governance, Design, and Delivery of Educator Preparation Programs

Findings

One cohesive Advisory Committee serves both training locations for ESC Region XII. The Advisory Council includes school district personnel such as superintendents and Human Resource directors that assist in placing interns in positions available in their districts. They also serve to keep ESC Region XII informed of current needs in the region. Two meetings of the Advisory Council are held each year and appropriate minutes are kept, along with agendas. Advisory Committee members understood their roles and responsibilities in the educator preparation process. Interviews with Advisory Committee members revealed that communication with Advisory Committee was strong and their desire to obtain input is an asset.

ESC Region XII is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20.

II. Admission Criteria

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10 – Admission Criteria

Findings

Region XII meets or exceeds state mandated standards for admission to educator preparation programs. These requirements include: a bachelor's degree from an accredited university, a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 in the last 60 hours of coursework, complete application with \$75.00 fee, and official transcripts from each university. Additional requirements consist of: Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) scores; 250 on reading, 230 in mathematics, and 220 in writing, interviews using the Haberman Star Teacher Selection instrument, a writing sample graded by a rubric, and a criminal background check. It has been decided that the Texas Success Initiative Exemption can substitute for the THEA. There are also specific course hour requirements for certification areas.

ESC Region XII is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10.

Commendations:

Requiring higher criteria for admissions set the tone for high expectations for the candidates and their effort. Higher criteria are reflective in the following: THEA basic skills testing, Haberman Star Teacher Selection instrument, writing sample in the application graded with a rubric, and criminal background check.

ESC Region XII requires the signing of all candidates to sign affidavit to abide by the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics. This sets an expectation and standard for all candidates to understand and abide by the code of ethics.

III. Curriculum

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum

Findings

As of the time of this visit, candidates received 46 hours of all-level pedagogy training from ESC Region XII, including the 17 topics listed in TAC §228.30. According to the self-report, candidates for EC-4 and 4-8 Generalist certification received an additional 49 hours of core content training. Candidates for all-level (EC-12) and secondary (8-12) certificates also receive 28 hours of reading and writing in the content areas.

Eight hours were provided by national consultants on a variety of topics. Another eight hours were counted for reading and writing a one-page summary of *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* by Ruby Payne. The assignment also asked students to answer questions about the book, but specifically said students were not required to turn them in. Students received two clock hours concerning using technology in instruction. Information on parent conferencing was transmitted via a handout. Twelve clock hours of test preparation was provided, 6 for content exams, and 6 for the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR). Interviews with interns indicated that the PPR training was “helpful and gave confidence in taking the test” and the instructors were “100% fabulous and gave good advise”. Test results confirm the positive comments from interns with the program’s last three year averaging of 98%.

TAC §228.30, which went into effect January 1, 2009 requires alternate certification programs prepare candidates primarily for the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) examination. This will mandate a revised curriculum for Region XII starting with the April 2009 cohort. Due to this cohort starting prior to the rules implementation in January of 2009, this curriculum update will take place prior to the next cohort group starting.

ESC XII is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30.

Commendations:

ESC Region XII provides 12 clock hours of test preparation, which doubles the requirement established by TEA, six clock hours for content and six clock hours for PPR.

Reading instruction of 28 clock hours spans across the content areas shows the commitment to emphasizes the need for all educators to stress reading and a method to assist in improving students’ success in that skill set.

ESC Region XII provides content area specialist to prepare and remediate educators for the content area tests.

IV. Program Delivery and Evaluation

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228. 35—Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training and TAC §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement

Findings

Thirty-five hours of field-based experiences prior to internship or clinical teaching are required by Region XII. These experiences include structured observations and activities in five different classrooms at different grade levels. Each observation is documented and submitted to the Region XII office. Also during the internship, an additional 24 hours of on-going training is documented. In addition, coursework is generally offered during evening hours to accommodate working students.

As of the time of this visit, ESC Region XII did not provide the 300 clock hours of training in addition to internship required by TAC §228.35 since January 1, 2009. After some database issues and research, Region XII determined that they were currently offering 262 clock hours to candidates for EC-4 Generalist; 266 hours to candidates for 4-8 Generalist; and 202 hours for candidates for Secondary 8-12 and all-level certifications. It was noted in the clarification meeting and closing that 300 hours are required for the incoming cohort. ESC Region XII plans to address the additional hours required by the new rule.

The program utilizes TExES scores (pass rate of 97-99% over the last three years) and standard qualitative questionnaires from students, mentors, and others to evaluate its program. In addition Stetson and Associates surveys are used to gather feedback from interns, mentors, and school administration. Staff members and the advisory committee use this feedback to address and focus on needs and strengths of the program.

**ESC Region XII is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35.
ESC Region XII is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40.**

Commendations:

ESC Region evaluates its program by self evaluations by way of questionnaires over curriculum, instructors, and overall satisfaction of the program. In addition to an in-house evaluation, Stetson and Associates completes an extensive survey with interns, mentors, campus principals, and other school administrators. These evaluations are reviewed and shared with the Advisory Committee for further feedback.

V. On-Going Support

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35(f)—On-going Educator Program Support

Findings

ESC Region XII meets the state required minimum of three formal observations for field supervision of interns and clinical teachers. It was noted that if any issues were observed or noted by campus administrator, more observations and interventions would be scheduled. Campus mentors also observe interns a minimum of four times per year. Clinical teachers must also be observed by their mentors as well as observe six times in other teachers' classrooms on their campus. Mentors receive TxBESS training from the ESC or the district.

Field Supervisors are all ESC specialists who have been trained in their role and responsibilities. The ratio of Field Supervisors to interns is generally 1-3.

In addition, Region XII is planning a New Teacher Academy (Fall 2009) to provide support for new teachers during their first three years of teaching. This will be particularly useful to small

districts to enable beginning teachers to have more dialog and support from others. A new teacher blog is planned, as well as designated workshops at Region XII. Intervention Specialists will be available for observations and help from Region XII, and cohorts will be divided by grade level and content in order to be more meaningful to beginning teachers.

ESC Region XII is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35(f).

Commendations

ESC Region XII's low field supervisor to Intern/clinical teacher ratio (1-3) allows the field supervisor to focus to be more intense with fewer educators. This gives more individualized attention the intern and the opportunity to support the event extra guidance is needed.

Overall Program Recommendations

Bring PPR curriculum into alignment with rule TAC §228.35, implement prior to new cohort group of 2009.

Add clock hours to program for a minimum of 300 (excluding internship or clinical teaching) for all candidates, implement prior to new cohort group of 2009.

Resolve data base issues to streamline data retrieval and assist in tracking candidates throughout their time in the program, implement as soon as possible.

Consider requiring students to pass the Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) prior to admission into the program, therefore allowing the focus of program's curriculum to be on pedagogy and methodology.

Consider requiring candidates to pass the content exam prior to training and focusing on the PPR exam.

Establish better communication between Field Supervisors and Mentors, this will strengthen support for interns/clinical teachers. The communication will demonstrate respect for the Mentor and their input about the intern, implement for Fall of 2009.