



## Compliance Audit Report 2011-2012 Austin College Initial Teacher Preparation

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](http://www.tea.state.tx.us) for details.

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**County/District Number:** 091502

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Texas Education Agency (TEA) Program Specialists Mixon Henry and Vanessa Alba conducted a Compliance Audit, in accordance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §229.6 (a), of Austin College, Austin Teacher Program (ATP), with a focus on the Generalist EC-6 certification area preparation on November 2-4, 2011. The college offers a five- year program which leads to certification and a master's degree. The following are findings and recommendations for program improvement.

### **Data Collection and Analysis:**

Information concerning compliance with TAC governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A self-report was submitted to the Texas Education Agency on October 5, 2011. An onsite review of documents, student records, course materials, online courses, and curriculum correlation charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition, electronic questionnaires were sent to Austin College ATP's stakeholders by TEA staff. Seventeen of 26 advisory committee members responded to the questionnaires. Only two of five clinical teachers and interns responded; both field supervisors responded; two of five principals and three of five mentors responded. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence. Evidence of compliance was verified by using a rubric correlated to TAC rules.

## **Opening and Closing Session:**

The opening session on November 3, 2011, was attended by 15 people, including Dr. Michael Imhoff, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Karen Nelson, Associate Vice President of Instructional Effectiveness, and Dr. Barbara Sylvester, Department of Education Chair. The closing session on November 4, 2011, was attended by seven people.

## **COMPONENT I: COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs**

### **FINDINGS:**

Component I concerns governance of educator preparation programs, or the advisory committee. Program support was indicated by the governing body of Austin College ATP per TAC §228.20(c) as evidenced by the participation of Dr. Imhoff and Dr. Nelson in the Opening Session, and by Dr. Barbara Sylvester, in various aspects of the compliance audit.

The advisory committee consists of 28 members. Twelve members are from local school districts; one from an education service center; ten are from higher education; and five members represent community/business interests. Austin College ATP meets TAC §228.20(b) requirements for advisory committee composition.

The first advisory committee meeting of the academic year was held on October 29, 2011. Eighteen members attended this meeting. The agenda and minutes reflect the following items addressed in the advisory committee meeting: 1) discussion of mentor/cooperative teacher training; 2) results of the TExES exams; 3) employment history of last year's graduates; 4) TEA updates; 5) TEA compliance audit, and 6) discussions of preparation for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

Agendas, minutes, and attendee records were available to substantiate that the advisory committee meetings were held dating back to September 6, 2008. The second meeting for the academic year will be held on April 28, 2012. The agenda for the April 28 meeting will include a discussion of the 17 curriculum items noted in TAC §228.30. Dr. Sylvester has created a chart detailing how the 17 items spiral through the curriculum and are repeated from course to course to ensure candidate understanding. Eighty-three percent of the advisory committee members indicated in their electronic questionnaires that they did meet two times per academic year. Eleven percent indicated that meetings were held more often, but in speaking to Dr. Sylvester, the on-going communication with members and the program events may have caused that response. The program meets the requirements for conducting a minimum of two advisory committee meetings per academic year as required by TAC §228.20(b).

The advisory committee members reported that they do assist in the design, delivery, evaluation and major policy decisions of the educator preparation program as it is documented by advisory committee meeting minutes and responses in the questionnaires. As an example of input by advisory committee members, 93% of the respondents to the electronic questionnaire stated they had input on field experience. This information was noted in a Power-Point presented on October 3, 2009.

**Based on the evidence presented, Austin College is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.**

## COMPONENT II: ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10– Admission Criteria

### FINDINGS:

According to the Austin College website, the candidate must meet the following criteria to enter the teacher certification program:

- a four degree from an accredited institution of higher learning or be enrolled in Austin College [ TAC §227.10(C)];
- have a GPA of 3.0 [TAC §227.10(A)]; 24 semester credit hours in a content field [TAC 227.10(C);
- show mastery of basic skills proficiency (TSI) [TAC §227.10(4)];
- exhibit adequate oral communication skills from required coursework Education 351 and written communication from required coursework Education 475, which requires nine writing samples embedded in the course that represents the other screening device and participate in an interview per [TAC §227.10(6)];
- submit an application [TAC §227.10(6)];
- submit three letters of recommendation; and
- complete a successful background check [TAC §227.10(7)].

No out-of-country applicants whose first language is not English have requested admittance into the program.

In a review of the candidates' records, TEA Program Specialists found all required criteria documented except for the three letters of reference. Some letters were missing from student folders. TEA Program Specialists verified that no candidates were admitted with a grade point average of less than 2.5.

The self-report submitted to TEA by Dr. Sylvester stated that recruitment was conducted through the college website, catalog, and school and community college visits [TAC §227.10(7)].

Because of the missing letters of recommendation in student folders, TEA Program Specialists could not verify that all admission criteria were applied consistently; therefore Austin College is out of compliance with TAC §227.10 (7).

**Based on the evidence presented, Austin College is not in compliance with TAC §227 - Admission Criteria.**

## **COMPONENT III: CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum**

### **FINDINGS:**

Austin College ATP is approved to offer teacher certification in 20 certification areas. For the purpose of this compliance audit, the Generalist EC-6 certificate was selected as the field for in-depth review.

Qualifications necessary to be selected as a course instructor require a Ph.D. and five years of classroom teaching experience. Instructor's credentials were presented for review and a criterion for selection was verified by review of instructor vitas. TEA Program Specialists verified that instructors had the appropriate background and experience to provide instruction in this certification area.

In reviewing the Generalist EC-6 curriculum, TEA Program Specialists verified that the educator standards were the curricular basis for instruction as required by TAC §228.30(a). The TEA audit team reviewed coursework, three alignment charts, and course syllabi. Instructors were interviewed to gain a greater understanding of how the program curriculum is implemented.

Course syllabi identified educator standards, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the 17 mandated topics, TExES domains and competences, focused reading assignments, required text books, and assignments for each course.

The 17 topics were included in the coursework as prescribed TAC §228.30(b). An alignment chart which identified each of the 17 topics was provided to TEA staff which demonstrated the spiraling of the topics in several courses. This integrated methodology can be seen and verified in the reading emphasis in the content areas. Reading instruction and remediation takes place in 12 courses. This purpose was to emphasize the importance of reading regardless of the age of the student or the course the student is taking, such as mathematics or science. Technology instruction is completely embedded in all coursework.

The instructors provide 18-24 clock hours of preparation for testing, but it is embedded in coursework. Additionally, the program requires each student take pre-tests for the certification exam. Austin College scores the pre-tests, and provides one-on-one analysis of the results of the competences with the candidate. The program does not document the time allotted for this activity, thus they are in non-compliance with TAC §228.35 (a) (C).

Clinical teachers and interns were asked to respond to a series of questions sent electronically and prepared by TEA in order to verify aspects of the curriculum and effectiveness of the program delivery. Only two of the five candidates responded, so the data could not be used for program evaluation. Both of the two candidates stated that all curriculum elements were present and were helpful in their preparation.

**Based on evidence presented, Austin College ATP is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum.**

## COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training

### FINDINGS:

Component III concerns program delivery, required hours and field supervision. Currently, the Austin College ATP is delivered in a face-to-face format. The total program consists of 622 clock hours for elementary certification, and 555 clock hours for secondary and all-level certification. This meets the requirements set forth in TEC §228.25(a) (3). Evidence for verifying the required number of hours was found in the self-report, review of course syllabi, student records, and Austin College's degree plan.

One hundred sixteen clock hours of field-based experience were verified prior to clinical teaching and internship per TAC §228.35(d). Candidates are required to provide reflective journals, perform specific activities aligned to classroom requirements, create and teach lessons. Field experience is embedded within three courses; EDU 225, EDU 351, and EDU 475. Instructors have a log to document and verify the field experience and the hours required by the college. Austin College ATP does not allow the substitution of video in place of actual classroom observations.

Austin College ATP does not allow previous experience to substitute for any course work, field experience or other university requirements as allowed per TAC §228.35(a)(6). Six hundred-sixteen hours of coursework prior to clinical teaching/internship were verified by candidate records as required by TAC §228.35(a).

Austin College ATP does not count training provided by a school district and/or campus toward the required program hours, but does encourage candidates' attendance to further their knowledge of procedures of campus training and to better understand district curriculum expectations.

Clinical teaching is a 13-week full-day practicum which is more than the minimum of twelve weeks required by TAC §228.35(d) (2) (B). Documentation of the first contact by the field supervisor with candidates, three formal observations, and summative conferences were found in the student folders.

Per TAC §228.35(d) (2) (C), an internship of 180 school days or an academic year is required for intern candidates. The assignments must match the certification field for which the individual is accepted into the program and trained. In addition, according to TAC §228.35(d) (2) (C), the intern should be issued the appropriate probationary certificate and classified in PEIMS as "teacher of record" on the campus. Evidence was present in candidate folders that TAC rule was followed with regard to matching the certification field to the placement of the candidate in the appropriate classroom. Evidence was presented in the form of observation documents that the internship and clinical teaching took place in an actual school setting rather than a distance learning lab or a virtual school setting as prescribed by TAC §228.35(d)(2)(C)(ii). All clinical teaching and internship experiences were completed in local independent school districts.

According to TAC §228.35(e), Austin College ATP is responsible for providing mentor training that is scientifically-based. Austin College offers TxBESS training for mentors and cooperating teachers. If the training is completed the hours can fulfill the issuance of Continuing

Professional Education (CPE) hours. For those that do not attend the training sessions, a one-on-one handbook review is provided by the program's field supervisors.

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. The two field supervisors meet at the beginning of each semester to review the handbook, program expectations, and clarification of roles and responsibilities. This was documented by meeting notes and a sign-in sheet.

Initial contact with the candidate within the first three weeks of the assignment as required by TAC §228.35(f) by the field supervisor was verified. The initial contact was completed by a face-to-face meeting at the district campus and on the college campus and documented on the field supervisors' logs

According to §228.35(f) (3), during an internship, the program must provide a minimum of one formal observation during the first semester and two formal observations during the second semester. This documentation was verified in candidate folders confirming this schedule.

A total of three observations [TAC §228.35(f) (4)] must be conducted during the clinical teaching assignment and must be at least 45 minutes in duration [TAC §228.35(f)]. TAC §228.35(f) also states that the first observation must be conducted within the first six weeks of clinical teaching. Compliance with this schedule was verified in candidate folders with a start and stop time noted on observation forms.

Furthermore, TAC §228.35(f) requires that the field supervisor documents instructional practices observed and provides written feedback through an interactive conference with the candidates. In candidate folders, evidence was found to verify this practice.

It is also the responsibility of Austin College ATP to provide a copy of the written feedback to the candidate's campus administrator as required by TAC §228.35(f). This documentation was verified in candidate folders.

Additional informal observations and coaching were provided by the program as specified in TAC §228.35(f). This was noted with the verification of additional observations and candidate /field supervisor interactions.

**Based on evidence presented, Austin College ATP is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.35 – PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ON-GOING SUPPORT.**

## **COMPONENT V: PROGRAM EVALUATION – Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement**

### **FINDINGS:**

Austin College has a candidate assessment and benchmarking process as prescribed by TAC §228.40(a). Benchmarks are the successful completion of courses prescribed in the degree plan. A candidate cannot continue through the program without successful completion in each of the prescribed courses. The Austin College degree plans were found which was found in candidates' records.

Readiness for testing [TAC §228.40(b)] is determined by course completion, a completion of a certification practice-test, and a one-on-one review of the certification test competencies. 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.

Evaluation of the program's design and delivery of the curriculum should be continuous per TAC §228.40(c). Information such as performance data, scientifically-based research practices, and the results of internal and external assessments should be included in the evaluation process. Austin Colleges collects and utilizes the following data in curriculum and program evaluation:

- ASEP Data
- Qualitative evaluations from teaching candidates, alumni surveys, principals, faculty members, cooperating teachers and mentors, field supervisors
- Candidate retention
- Number of candidates passing TExES on first attempt
- Number of testing attempts by each candidate
- Outside evaluation results (CREATE data)

All of this data is presented to the advisory committee for input and discussion in order to improve the programs as reflected in agendas, minutes, and PowerPoints.

According to TAC §228.40(d), the program will retain documents that evidence a candidates' eligibility for admission to the program and evidence of completion of all program requirements for a period of five years after program completion. This documentation was kept in a locked office in locked cabinets.

**Based on evidence presented, Austin College is 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 has coursework to address ethics and the college has a policy on ethics. The candidates' receive ethics training in their coursework.

## **Senate Bill 174/Texas Administrative Code §229**

### **Current Accreditation Status**

Austin College is currently Accredited based on test scores from ASEP.

## Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

<b>Pass Rate Performance:</b>	2008-2009 Final 80% Standard	2009-2010 70% Standard	2010-2011 75% Pass Rate
Overall:	98%	96%	97%
Test Area reviewed:			
Generalist EC-6	100%	88%	100%

## 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 meet requirements of all Texas Administrative Code rule governing educator preparation programs, the following recommendations are made:

**TAC §227.10(7) Any other academic criteria for admission that are published and applied consistently to all educator preparation candidates catalogus; brochures; student handbook; website**

- Include the required three letters of reference required by Austin College are included in admission documentation prior to admittance into program. This should be corrected immediately.

**Texas Administrative Code §228.30 (a)(3)(C) six clock hours of explicit test preparation that is not embedded in other curriculum**

- Document the practice test and one-on-one competency review to demonstrate the test preparation for the candidates

### GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Use a course syllabus template to help candidates in the program identify the educator standards and the alignment of the course requirements.
- Stay current with TAC rules and State Board for Educator Certification polices. Continue to participate in webinars and meetings provided by TEA