



Technical Audit Report Texas College October 4, 2011

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: Rev. Orenthia Mason, Chair of Education

County/District Number: 212502

TEA Approval Date: January 9, 1961

A technical audit visit for the traditional undergraduate and the post-baccalaureate educator certification programs at Texas College in Tyler, Texas, was conducted on October 4, 2011, by Texas Education Agency (TEA) Program Specialists Dr. Mary S. Black and Mr. Mixon Henry in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §229.6 (a).

Background

This technical audit reviewed progress made since September 29, 2010, when TEA found the program to be out of compliance with Texas Administrative Code in five components: governance, admission criteria, curriculum, program delivery and on-going support, and evaluation. A Memorandum of Understanding outlining improvements to be made within the next 12 months was drafted at that time and signed by the President of Texas College, Dr. Dwight J. Fennell, Dr. Johnnye Jones, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Rev. Orenthia Mason, Chair for the Division of Education, and Ms. Octavia Brown, Director of Teacher Education.

The Memorandum of Understanding required two compliance status reports. The first one was received by TEA on November 2, 2010. The report documented that adequate steps had been taken to correct two deficiencies: 1) to make sure all candidates met all requirements for certification, including the completion of student teaching; and 2) to document all field observations by college field supervisors, provide one copy of the observation to each campus principal, and to keep one copy in each student's official records. The second status report was received by TEA on January 14, 2011. This report documented that adequate steps had been taken to: 1) track each student's progress through the program each semester; 2) instruct all candidates in strategies for teaching special needs students, English language learners and gifted and talented students in the regular classroom; 3) ensure that all candidates received

instruction in reading strategies and instructional technology; and finally 4) offer a minimum of six clock hours of stand-alone TExES test preparation for all candidates.

Data Collection and Analysis:

The audit in October 2011 used information from the two compliance status reports, a review of documents, syllabi, and curriculum correlation charts, and other reports created by Texas College as evidence of compliance with Texas Administrative Code. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation were used to evaluate the evidence. Evidence of compliance was measured using a rubric correlated to Texas Administrative Code.

Opening and Closing Sessions:

The October 4, 2011, meeting began with discussion between Rev. Mason, Ms. Brown, and the TEA program specialists. The original Memorandum of Understanding and the two compliance status reports were reviewed. Rev. Mason and Ms. Brown described new policies and procedures they had put into place to address any remaining compliance issues. After that discussion, the TEA program specialists reviewed documents and student records.

A closing meeting was held in the afternoon of October 4, 2011, to debrief the review. Attending were Rev. Mason, Ms. Brown, Cynthia Marshall Biggins, Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs, John Roberts, Registrar, Dr. John Abbott, Area Coordinator for the Division of Education, Brigette Downs, faculty, and T'monika Walton, administrative assistant. Ms. Biggins called President Fennell on the phone immediately after the closing, and Mary Black informed of the results of the review and thanked him for his support of the program.

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

FINDINGS:

Several new members have been added to the advisory committee since September 2011, making a total of 15 members representing local schools and districts, business and community, and higher education. Three meetings were held in the 2010-2011 academic year, September 28, September 29, and April 14. Meeting dates for 2011-2012 are November 8, January 9, and June 5. Sign-in sheets, minutes and agendas for the April 2011 meeting were reviewed. The two meetings in September 2010 coincided with the TEA audit in that year. Elements out of compliance at the September 2010 visit were 1) lack of documentation for two advisory committee meetings per year, and lack of evidence of advisory committee input on field-based experiences. These elements have been corrected by improved documentation provided by advisory committee minutes of April 14, 2011.

Advisory committee members were all invited to participate in TEA webinar training to better understand their required roles and responsibilities. Rev. Mason and Ms. Brown attended the webinar the fall of 2011. Training for advisory committees prepared by TEA was left with Texas College in September 2010 to use at their convenience.

Based on the evidence presented, Texas 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 and TAC §241 – Admission and Certification Criteria

FINDINGS:

In 2010, Texas College had admitted more than 10% of the cohort with less than the required 2.5 GPA and was out of compliance. A review of ten student records (out of 26) at the October 2011 audit documented that no students have since been admitted into the teacher preparation today with less than a 2.5 GPA. A list was presented of students who had indicated interest in the teacher preparation program whose GPA was below 2.5. A letter was presented for review that advised the students that they were currently on probationary status with one semester to bring up the GPA. Another letter was presented for review that was sent to students still needing to demonstrate basic skills. The letter informs them that they are provisionally admitted into educator preparation program providing they pass either the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) or the COMPASS basic skills exam by December 15, 2011.

A list of new benchmarks for the educator preparation program indicated that upon entering Texas College, students seeking teacher certification must meet with an advisor from the Division of Education and attend an orientation session. Passing the THEA or COMPASS is considered a Level I benchmark to be completed during the first semester of the sophomore year. The list of benchmarks also indicates that candidates must complete all certification requirements within two years from the day they are accepted into the Texas College educator preparation program. This limitation was put into policy to prevent the problem of candidates waiting several years to take certification exams and apply for certification. The benchmark list is signed by both student and advisor and is kept in the student's records.

Admission also requires an interview plus two written essays and three written personal recommendations. A rubric has been developed for the interview. Other requirements include an official college transcript, a copy of the degree plan, an oral proficiency exam, a minimum of 59 credit hours with a career GPA of 2.5 or higher and an application to the educator preparation program. A spreadsheet system has been instituted during the past year to track student progress and benchmarks. This documentation is kept in each student's file.

Based on the evidence presented, Texas College is in compliance with TAC §227 - Admission Criteria.

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

FINDINGS:

All degree plans for teacher certification were revised during 2010-2011. A number of courses were dropped from the degree plan due to redundancy, and others were made requirements for all candidates. The number of semester credit hours necessary to graduate with educator certification is now 120-122 (465 to 510 clock hours), depending on certification area. The course Educational Technology and Media is now required for all candidates to fulfill the mandate to teach instructional technology. Three reading courses are now required for Generalist EC-6 candidates, down from five in September 2010. Fundamentals of Reading Instruction is required for all other certification candidates. The course on Cultural Diversity now

addresses the needs of special education students, English language learners, and gifted and talented students in the regular classroom as well as racial and ethnic diversity. These changes are documented in the Program Review Report for Texas College Division of Education 2010-2011 prepared by Rev. Mason, Dr. Melanie Cunningham, and Ms. Brown.

To address the need to offer six hours of stand-alone test preparation, all candidates are now required to take the six hour online T-Cert test preparation course for Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR). Copies of certificates of course completion are kept in each student's file. In addition, monthly seminars for TExES preparation are held for those students testing that semester. Physical Education majors seeking certification are also required to attend test preparation workshops once per month and departmental tutorials. New test preparation materials have been added to the Teacher Resource Center.

Most syllabi reviewed contained the TExES standards, domains and competencies, but some outside the Division of Education did not. Course alignment with educator preparation standards is currently ongoing throughout the four divisions of the college. Three charts showing the correlation of courses to TEKS, the 17 mandated curriculum topics, and PPR standards were reviewed by TEA program specialists. Training in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) strategies had also been implemented for all faculty members at Texas College. This system is based on scientific research of effective instruction, motivation, and professional development.

The Texas Educator's Code of Ethics is addressed in four required courses and is printed in full in the Texas College Teacher Preparation Handbook.

Additional commitment by the college to 21st century teaching and learning includes the addition of SMART boards in two classrooms in the Division of Education and the addition of wireless laptops to candidates to document field-based experiences.

Based on evidence presented, Texas College is 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:

The September 2010 audit found no evidence of criteria for allowing previous experience as required in TAC §228.35 (a) (6); and incomplete documentation for observations of student teachers. Both of these issues had been corrected by the October 2011 audit. The Teacher Education Handbook now outlines policies to allow candidates to meet part of the requirement for 30 clock hours of pre-student teaching field-based experiences by substituting recent substitute teaching, paraprofessional work, K-12 small group tutoring, reading to elementary students and other activities. Candidates must submit a summary of prior field-based experiences with a documented log including signature of the classroom teacher, principal or other school representative. Candidates must also submit written reflections describing classroom observations and activities working directly with students. This student packet must then be approved by the Chair of the Division of Education in order for students to get credit for

such prior experience. In addition, up to 15 clock hours of field-based experience can be gained through taped examples of best practices in collaboration with Tyler ISD.

Student Teaching observation forms with date, time in/time out, campus administrator signature indicating receipt of the observation, and evidence for informal observation and coaching have been developed in the past year and are in use for Fall 2011 student teachers. Field supervisors must sign and date indicating the required interactive feedback conference with the candidate. Texas College conducts three formal observations and weekly walk-thru visits with all student teachers. Walk-thru visits are also documented.

Field supervisors escort new student teachers to their campus on the first day of their assignment to introduce the candidate to the cooperating teacher and principal. Cooperating teachers sign and date a receipt to acknowledge receipt of the Texas College Student Teacher Handbook which contains policies and procedures for the cooperating teacher to follow. Rev. Mason and Ms. Brown serve as field supervisors and both have life time Texas teaching certificates. Dates for field supervisor training through the Division of Education for 2010-2011 were reviewed by TEA program specialists.

Based on evidence presented, Texas College 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:

Benchmarks for student progress, as required in TAC §228.40(a), are tracked on a spreadsheet and kept in each student's records. Syllabi list assessments for all courses. To determine candidate's readiness to test, pre-tests for the TExES examinations are administered to candidates and a T-Cert certificate of completion for PPR is required. Approval to take the TExES is only granted after admission to the program and completion of required coursework.

The Division of Education conducted an academic audit and overall program review after the September 2010 TEA audit. The advisory committee participated in the overall evaluation review according to minutes of their advisory committee meetings. The program used various sources of evidence for the review including ASEP data, TEA reports and recommendations, degree plans, and campus policies.

Student records have been reorganized since September 2011 and now contain all necessary information. Student files have been arranged into active and inactive categories and are now easy to find and use. The college will keep all student records for a minimum of five years in secure cabinets.

Based on evidence presented, Texas College 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).

Senate Bill 174/Texas Administrative Code §229

Current Accreditation Status

Texas College is currently rated "Accredited—Under Review."

Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

Pass Rate Performance:	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
	Final 80% Standard	70% Standard	75% Pass Rate
Overall:	100% (1 candidate only)	64% (7 candidates)	57% (7 candidates)
Demographics			
Female		71%	57%
Male		50%	NA
African American		56%	50%
Other		100% (1 candidate only)	60%
Test Areas			
Gen. EC-4		100%	0%
Physical Education		25%	0%
PPR EC-12		75%	80%

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:

- None at this time

GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Continue to track student progress;
- Continue to participate in TEA training webinars and meetings;
- Review degree plans for educator certification on a scheduled, rotating basis to make sure all candidates can meet instructional standards;
- Continue collaboration across the divisions of the college to ensure all candidates receive adequate instruction and rigor to be successful on the TExES educator certification exams;
- Consider the mission of the Division of Education. Success on the TExES examinations is key to fulfillment of this mission.