



Compliance Audit Report 2010-2011

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Initial Teacher Preparation Program

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.

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Program Specialists, Sandra Nix and Vanessa Alba, conducted a Texas Education Agency Compliance Audit of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program on April 5-7, 2011. The focus of the compliance audit was the initial teacher certification program-Generalist EC-6 certificate. The following are findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Data Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A review of requested documents, student records, course material, online courses, and curriculum correlations charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition, electronic questionnaires were sent to Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program stakeholders by TEA staff. Sixteen (16) out of twenty-five (25) advisory committee member; thirty-three (33) out of one hundred fifty (150) student teachers, twenty-four (24) out of twenty-eight (28) field supervisors, fifteen (15) out of fifty-one (51) principals, and none of the forty-three (43) cooperating teachers responded. During this compliance audit, three Texas A&M University educator preparation programs were evaluated during one visit. A self-report was submitted to the Texas Education Agency on March 8, 2011. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence.

Opening and Closing Session:

The opening session on April 5, 2011 was attended by thirty-seven (37) people, including Dr. Art Hernandez, Dean, College of Education, and Dr. Frank Lucido, Assistant Dean, and Dr. Denise Hill, Chair, Department of Teacher Education. The closing session on April 7, 2011 was attended by thirty-nine (39) people. It is important to note that the Provost was present at the closing session.

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

FINDINGS:

Program support was indicated by the governing body of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi initial preparation program per TAC §228.20(c) as evidenced by the participation of Dr. Art Hernandez, Dean, Dr. Frank Lucido, Assistant Dean, and Dr. Denise Hill, Chair of the Department of Teacher Education, in various aspects of the one-year post-approval visit.

The Teacher Education Advisory Committee Huddle (TEACH) consists of twenty-five (25) members. Twelve (12) members are from local school districts, one (1) from an education service center, and eleven (11) from higher education including Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and other surrounding two year colleges, and one (1) member representing community/business interests. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi meets TAC §228.20(b) requirements for advisory committee composition. The advisory committee functions under a set of by-laws. Because advisory committee membership tends to be fluid, yearly advisory committee training should be conducted and the handbook should be updated as necessary.

The first meeting of the 2010-2011 academic year was held on October 20, 2010. Eleven members attended this meeting. The agenda reflects, among other topics, discussion of TEA guidelines for accreditation, and alternative certification program orientation, new on the horizon, and details of the upcoming TEA visit. Agendas, minutes, and attendee records were available to substantiate that the advisory committee meetings were held. The second meeting for the academic year was held on March 3, 2011. Eleven members attended this meeting. An agenda was available noting discussion of the following: Constitution and bylaws; TEA principal survey; Department of Teacher Education consolidation with Special Services; changes in teacher education admission requirements; and possible changes to the Generalist EC-6 degree among other topics. Eighty-five point five percent (85.5%) of the advisory committee members indicated that they met two times per academic year and twelve point five percent (12.5%) indicated that they met more than two times per academic year. The program meets the requirements for conducting a minimum of two advisory committee meetings per academic year as required by TAC §228.20(b).

Sixteen (16) advisory committee members responded to the questionnaire sent by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The advisory committee members (100%) confirmed that they met two or more times per academic year, signed attendance records, and were provided an agenda and minutes. In addition, the advisory committee (60%) confirmed that they reviewed

the types of field-based experiences per TAC §228.35 (f) and participated in evaluation of the program (53.3%).

The advisory committee cited some of the strengths of the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's teacher education program as the relationship with the public and private schools, the strength of the field-based experiences, and student teaching program.

Some areas cited for improvement include the need for more instruction in classroom management, new ways for the candidates to prepare for the challenges of inclusion/mixed-ability classrooms, and differentiating instruction.

Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program 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:

To enter the initial teacher certification program at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, the candidate must be in their junior year of work, submit an application, and have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 on all academic work attempted or in the last 30 hours attempted [TAC 227.10(A)]. The candidate must have a 3.0 GPA in all College of Education courses attempted. Basic skills are verified by THEA scores of Reading 250, Math 230, writing 240 or a score of 26 or higher on the ACT or a score of 1180 or higher on the SAT. The applicant must also meet GPA requirements for the applicant's specific teaching field/certification area. (Math 2.75, History 3.0, Generalist 2.5). Specific grade requirements for all the certification areas can be found in the university catalogue. The applicant must complete the TAMU-CC oral communication requirement by successfully completing a public speaking course. An interview is conducted to determine the oral communication skills of the candidate or his/her appropriateness as a teacher. The program has a list of questions to be used during the interview and a rubric that is used to evaluate the responses from the prospective candidates. [TAC §227.10(7)]. The candidate must also complete EDCI 3311 with a grade of "C" or better and have a certification plan signed by an academic advisor, the university certification officer, and the program coordinator. Completion of a criminal background check form and completion of TB screening is also required.

Out-of-country applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate competence in the English language by submission of an official minimum score on the written or computer-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). In addition, the applicant must have his/her transcripts from an out-of-country non-English speaking university evaluated by an approved evaluation service [TAC §227.10(7)].

In a review of the student folders, it was found that the application, official transcript, interview questions, testing information, and transcript evaluation was present as verification of adherence to admission criteria.

The self-report submitted by Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program stated that recruitment was conducted through the website, catalog, career fairs, brochures, school and community college visits, and through media outlets. [TAC §227.10(7)].

Based on the evidence presented, Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program is in compliance with TAC § 227 - Admission and Certification Criteria.

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

FINDINGS:

Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi is approved to offer initial teacher certification in thirty-seven (37) areas.

Qualifications necessary to be selected as a course instructor require an advanced degree, Texas teaching certificate, and more than 5 years experience teaching content at specific grade level in a public or private school. Instructors' credentials were presented for review and criteria for selection were verified.

According to the self-report, each course has a detailed syllabus that contains the instructor contact information, course description, goals, objectives, Texas Standards, TEKS addressed, reading assignments, instructional strategies, classroom policies, assignments, and 17 mandated TAC topics addressed by course, and focused reading assignments. These items were confirmed in the syllabi available for the courses that comprise the teacher certification program. Courses listed for completion in the Generalist EC-6 program were EDCI 3311 School and Society; EDCI 4608: Planning, Teaching, Assessment and Technology in Grades EC-6; EDCI 4324: Instructional Design for Special Populations: Grades EC-6; ETEC 3100: Educational Technology for Preservice Teachers in Schools; EDCI 4313: Classroom Management in Grades EC-6; and EDCU 4394: Student Teaching: Grades EC-6.

The courses are delivered in three blocks. EDCI 3311: School and Community is in the first block. It covers the characteristics, organization, and management of the American School System including the history of the development of American schools, legal and ethical issues, teaching as a profession, influence of cultural background on instruction of students, characteristics and needs of special populations, and adapting curriculum and instruction for students from special populations. There are three courses in block two. EDCI 4608: Planning, Teaching, Assessment and Technology in Grades EC-6 focuses on teaching. This course includes methods and strategies for delivering instruction and creating a positive classroom environment. Assessment focuses on traditional and authentic alternative assessment. Technology covers a variety of media and techniques. EDCI 4324: Instructional Design for Special Populations: Grades EC-6 studies the characteristics and needs of special student populations in a culturally diverse society. Special populations included special education, gifted and talented, at-risk, and bilingual. Instructional strategies, differentiating curriculum, and diversifying assessment are examined in relation to special populations. ETEC 3100: Educational Technology for Preservice Teachers in Schools provides an overview of basic resource tools and instructional methods to consider when designing and developing educational technology integrated curriculum plans and with basic integrated applications available for creating student electronic portfolios. The last block consists of two courses. EDCI

4313: Classroom Management in Grades EC-6 covers classroom organization and management as it is related to basic principles of human development and learning. Preventative discipline techniques utilizing both group and individual processes are emphasized. The last course is student teaching, EDCU 4394. Most of these courses have a field-based requirement as part of the coursework.

Seven hours of test preparation are provided for candidates prior to TExES testing. This preparation exceeds the requirement for explicit test preparation per TAC §228.35(C).

Through the curriculum review, it was found that the curriculum demonstrates vertical and horizontal articulation of content. Authentic objectives are stated for each course with meaningful with measurable assessments mainly in the form of rubrics. Each course aligns with the Texas Administrative Code's educator standards as evidenced by the alignment charts submitted to TEA. In addition, curriculum alignment charts were presented by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christ Generalist EC-6 program detailing alignment of their courses with the 17 mandated curriculum topics including test preparation required by TAC §228.30 and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Student teachers responding to the TEA questionnaire indicated that the Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi is doing an excellent job in preparing them in the following areas: Providing a variety of instructional strategies for the classroom (100%); theories on how people learn (96.6%); how to develop lessons (96.9%); differentiating or changing instruction to meet individual student needs (96.9%); and instructional technology in the classroom (96.8%). Student teachers felt that the following areas needed strengthening: Teacher's responsibilities for administering the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) examination (40.6%); process of curriculum development (21.9%); how to use formative assessments to diagnose student learning needs (18.8%); and conducting parent conferences. In addition, in comments provided by the student teachers in response to areas that the program could improve, more instruction in classroom management was a theme that emerged. Since no cooperating teachers responded to the questionnaire, their perceptions cannot be presented. Principals responding to the questionnaire reported that they felt that student teachers need more detailed information regarding students in the special populations groups such as gifted and talented; Dyslexia; 504; and more on how to deal with emotionally disturbed students and how to deal with students who are At-Risk and ESL. In addition, the principals suggested that student teachers would benefit from more preparation in the transition from the current accountability to STAAR testing.

Based on evidence presented, Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program 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:

Currently, the Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program is delivered in a face-to-face format. The program offers two Generalist EC-6 emphasis programs: Early Childhood and Reading. The program consists of 1485 clock hours for Generalist EC-6 with an Early Childhood emphasis and 1350 clock hours of coursework for Generalist EC-6 with a reading emphasis prior to student teaching. The total preparation program for both certificates has a total of 2400 clock hours.

Ninety (90) clock hours of field-based observations are required for Generalist EC-6 with Early Childhood emphasis, while two hundred twenty-five (225) clock hours of field-based observations are required for Generalist EC-6 with a Reading Emphasis. The field-based observations occur in block 2 courses and were conducted in seven (7) specifically identified schools in the Corpus Christi ISD, one (1) school in Gregory-Portland ISD, and on several campuses in the Flour Bluff ISD. Field-based observations were documented by time logs, focused observation activities, class discussions, and lesson plans. The activities of the students in the field-based observation portion of the program were supervised by eight (8) university field-based faculty members, and twenty-six (26) student teaching supervisors. Over 50% of the students' time in block 2 is spent in the field in classrooms supervised by a certified teacher.

Student teaching is conducted for a minimum of twelve to thirteen weeks during block 3. Twelve (12) schools have been identified as sites for student teaching. Every student teacher must complete a full day of observations before school begins and the first day of school on the campus. Then the student teacher must write a two-page reflection paper and have it signed by the school's principal. A comprehensive Student Teaching Handbook was presented in the document review. Each candidate receives detailed information on the goals and objectives of the experience, the lengths and types of assignments, the role of the student teacher, the role of the cooperating teacher, and the role of the university supervisor. It also outlines the process for the observations and the student teaching notebook. Student teachers are expected to attend three meetings scheduled periodically throughout the semester of student teaching.

TAC §228.35(f) On-Going Educator Preparation Program Support 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. Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program utilizes two sets of field supervisors. One set focuses on the field-based activities of the candidates and the other set focuses on the student teaching aspect of the training. There were eleven (11) field supervisors during the fall semester and eighteen (18) field supervisors during the spring semester. All were certified teachers. An agenda, sign in sheets, and a training materials were presented as verification of training as required. The Student Teacher Handbook which defined job responsibilities was also provided.

In review of the observation documents in the students' folders and in the document review, it was noted that a place to record the start and stop time of the observation was not on the form. It is suggested that the start and stop time for the observation be recorded on the actual observation form. In addition, it would be helpful if the candidate's start date be recorded on the actual observation form as well. The start and stop times, and start date for the candidates were

recorded on the field supervisor logs which used the format needed to be uploaded in the TEA ASEP database. This documentation verified that the observations were 45 minutes in duration.

Six observations are conducted by the field supervisor. The first contact between the field supervisor and candidates takes place during one of their education class sessions. TAC §228.35(f) states that the first observation must be conducted within the first six weeks of student teaching. This was verified in the student folder review. The field supervisor documented practices observed and provided written feedback through an interactive conference with the candidate. There is a place on the observation form for the student teacher and the mentor to sign. Informal observations and coaching were provided by the field supervisor as appropriate. It is recommended that the program document all coaching and support either in person, email, or via phone provided to each individual candidate.

Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program ensures that every candidate has a cooperating teacher. The Student Teaching Handbook was provided to each cooperating teacher. The observation criteria were also shared with the cooperating teacher. Training was conducted and verified by agenda and sign-in sheets.

Student teacher questionnaires verified that their teaching placement matched the grade level and certification field for which they were seeking certification (89.3%). Fifty-three (53%) percent of the student teachers responding indicated that they communicated with their field supervisor once a week and twenty-five percent (25%) indicated that they communicated with them more than once a week. The student teachers also verified that they were contacted within the first three weeks of their student teaching assignment by their field supervisor (100%), that the first observation was conducted within the first six weeks of their assignment (100%), that written feedback was provided (96.4%), and an interactive conference was held (100%). Ninety six point four percent (96.4%) indicated that they had received additional informal observations and coaching. One hundred percent (100%) of the student teachers responding indicated that the field supervision was effective or very effective.

Principals from schools that hosted student teachers sent emails to Dr. Lucido verifying that the field supervisors had provided them with written observation feedback as required by TAC 228.35(f). However, it is recommended that the program establish a process to verify that each principal is provided with a copy of the formal observation as required by code. Ninety-two point three percent (92.3%) of the principals verified that they had received written feedback about the student teacher observations. The responding principals also communicated through the comments section of the questionnaire that they felt the strength of the program was the field supervision and the high expectations that the staff has for the students.

Based on evidence presented, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi initial teacher preparation program 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:

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has an extensive candidate assessment and benchmarking process that were outlined in the document “Professional Development Coursework Benchmarks.” Each course was listed with the expected items to be completed and a grade of “C” or higher in order to continue to the next course. In addition, successful completion of the field-observations and successful completion of the field experience acted as a benchmark step. Assessment criteria are identified for each course in the Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi initial teacher preparation program are also included in this document.

Readiness for testing is determined by several benchmarks: successful completion on coursework; attendance at a PPR review; and completion of the PPR diagnostic test. Test approval is granted after all prerequisites have been met. If a candidate is struggling in the program, tutoring is provided by professors, instructors, and mentors.

Evaluation at the program level is conducted every twelve (12) months and involves participation by the Dean, faculty members, advisory committee members, public and private school administrators, teaching candidates, and human resource directors. The curriculum is evaluated by information gathered from the candidates, professors, candidate retention information. Candidate success will also be evaluated by test performance, especially the number that pass on the first attempt.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi initial teacher preparation program is managing the retention of records and security appropriately. Records are kept electronically and in paper format under secure conditions. Records are retained for a minimum of 5 years [TAC §228.40(d)].

Based on evidence presented, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi initial teacher certification program is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.40 – ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

Senate Bill 174/Texas Administrative Code §229

Currently, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi holds a status of “Accredited with an Action Plan” [TAC §229.3 and TAC §229.11] for one demographic group-African Americans. That demographic group had a sixty-three percent (63%) pass rate during completion year 2009-2010. This action plan was based on a passing standard of seventy percent (70%). The action plan was provided for review. The plan included faculty members maintaining awareness of state standards for successful programs, pre-testing all candidates to identify baseline needs for TExES exams, and providing support/re-teaching for African American candidates who demonstrate a need for extra instruction. Recommendations in the action plan included: staying abreast of current changes that are academic and/or professional in nature, providing African

American candidates with more opportunities for test practice activities, and ensuring that all candidates seeking K-12 principal certificates have the needed coursework to ensure passage of the proficiency requirements prior to taking the TExES principal exam. The action plan is scheduled to begin this spring and is to be re-evaluated in August 2011.

Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

Pass Rate Performance:	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
	Final 80%Standard	Final 80% Standard	70% Pass Rate
Overall:	96%	97%	94%

Program Recommendations:

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the compliance audit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any identified component, please consult the TAC rules and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. Program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

None at this time.

GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

Component 1 Recommendations:

- Expand the depth of the advisory committee by adding more advisory committee members beyond those required by rule;
- Develop an advisory committee handbook for members detailing the operation of the advisory committee and their roles and responsibilities; and
- Provide advisory committee training annually to ensure all advisory committee members are reminded of their responsibilities in program development, policy decisions, evaluation, and field experiences for candidates and provide orientation to the program’s operation.

Component 3 Recommendations:

- Evaluate the TEA training modules to address the teachers’ responsibilities for TAKS found at www.TexasAssessment.com/Taonlinetraining.

Component 4 Recommendations:

- Ensure all cooperating teachers/mentors have received training. If the training is provided by the school district, retain evidence of this training in the records for audit purposes. Look for creative ways to provide training, such as webinars, or develop an online module;

- Align the language of TAC with program language—differentiate the terminology between the field-based supervisors and the student teaching field-based supervisor;
- Add a signature line on the observation form for the field supervisor and the teaching candidate;
- Require both the candidate and field supervisor to sign the formal observation form as evidence of the observation and the interactive conference that follows; and
- Revise the observation form to show the start date of the student teaching assignment, start and stop time of the observation, and start and stop time of the interactive conference.