

2024–2025 Continuing Approval Review Report A Career in Teaching - McAllen

INTRODUCTION

Texas Education Agency (TEA) Education Specialist, Rebecca Bunting, conducted a five-year Continuing Approval Review of the A Career in Teaching – McAllen educator preparation program (EPP) on February 10-24, 2025. Per 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.13(a), "an educator preparation program (EPP) ...shall be reviewed at least once every five years...". Mr. Adrian Fernandez, Chief Executive Officer, was identified as the program Legal Authority and Dr. Jaime Lopez, Program Director and Backup Legal Authority, was the primary EPP contact for the review process. The A Career in Teaching – McAllen EPP was approved by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) on January 22, 2009. On June 28, 2024, the EPP was notified of the review. At that time, the EPP was rated Accredited with a risk level that was Stage 3 (low). At the time of the review, the EPP was rated Accredited. The EPP reported 117 finishers for the 2022-2023 reporting year and 157 finishers for 2023-2024.

At the time of the review, the A Career in Teaching – McAllen EPP was approved to prepare and recommend candidates for certification in the Teacher class in the alternative certification (ALT) route.

The TEA administers TAC required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all EPPs in the state. (See the complete [TAC](#) for details.) The five-year Continuing Approval Review was conducted in a "Desk Review" format where EPP staff submitted requested documents to TEA for review.

The scope of this review included:

- 1) verifying compliance with requirements for EPPs as applicable to the certification class and certification route offered by the EPP using a standardized rubric aligned to Texas Administrative Code and Texas Education Code; and
- 2) developing a corrective action plan for compliance and quality improvement based on review data, performance indicators identified in 19 TAC §229.4, and self-reported EPP information provided in the Status Report.

Information concerning compliance with TAC governing EPPs was collected by a variety of means. The EPP submitted a Status Report and related program documents to TEA on January 25, 2025. Additional EPP documents, including records for five candidates were submitted by the EPP on February 6, 2025. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence.

"Findings" reflect EPP compliance with the TAC requirement(s) in a component. Determinations of non-compliance are supported by "Evidence" collected during the review process. Where a "Corrective Action" is required, the program should consult the TAC and/or TEC, complete the corrective action to bring the EPP into compliance and submit the required evidence of corrective action to TEA by the identified Due Date.

Corrective actions that are planned but have not been implemented must include an implementation date.

"Advisement" is important new information and reminders provided to EPP staff during the review.

"Recommendations" are suggestions for general program improvement or reminders of important information for the EPP and no follow-up is required.

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Following are the findings of the review.

GOVERNANCE

Oversight of the EPP and ongoing evaluation of effectiveness of the programs within the EPP were reviewed. Following are the findings:

FINDINGS

1. The EPP has established an advisory committee that:
 - provides guidance and input on matters of program design, delivery, evaluation, and major policy decisions of each program within the EPP; and
 - is composed of a variety of collaborators including representation from at least three of these areas: public schools accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and TEA-recognized private schools; regional education service centers; institutions of higher education; and business and community interests; and
 - meets at least one time per year. [19 TAC §228.20(b)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.25(b)]
2. The EPP has published an exit policy that is reviewed & signed by each candidate at admission. [19 TAC §228.20(h)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.31(b)]
3. The EPP has not consistently retained candidate and EPP records per the records retention requirement in [19 TAC §228.10(b)(2) & §228.40(f)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.13(h) & §228.31(i)]
Evidence: The EPP was missing records showing field supervisors had completed EPP training at the time of the candidates' internships and evidence that field supervisors are accomplished as shown by student learning. The EPP was also missing evidence such as field supervisor logs showing informal observations had been conducted.

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

The EPP must correct the deficiencies identified by 5 PM on Thursday, June 26, 2025:

1. **19 TAC §228.31(i) & §228.13(h) Records Retention**

The EPP must update and implement a records retention process to retain records relating to candidate admission and completion of preparation requirements for at least five years from the date the candidate leaves the program or finishes the program. The records retention method must ensure information security. The process must also include the retention of EPP records (e.g., evidence of mentor teacher and field supervisor qualifications, pre-post conference notes).

REQUIRED NOTIFICATIONS

Candidate records, the EPP website, and candidate handbooks were reviewed for evidence the EPP has communicated the required notifications to applicants and candidates. Following are the findings:

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FINDINGS

1. The EPP has informed applicants about the required criminal history background checks for clinical teaching and for employment as an educator in Texas. [19 TAC §227.1(b)]
2. The EPP has notified applicants and candidates in all programs about
 - the potential impact of criminal history on candidate certification; and
 - the right to request a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation from TEA. [19 TAC §227.1(d)]
3. The EPP has informed applicants about the admission requirements and completion requirements of the EPP. [19 TAC §227.1(c)(1) & (2)]
4. The EPP has informed applicants about
 - the EPP performance over time for the past five years; and
 - the effect of supply and demand forces on the educator workforce in Texas. [19 TAC §227.1(c)(3)(A) & (B)]
5. The EPP has published a complaints process that includes a link to the TEA complaints process. [19 TAC §228.70(b)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.123 (a)-(d)]

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

None

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Candidate records including applications, transcripts, and screening rubrics were reviewed to verify the EPP qualifies applicants for admission as required in 19 TAC Chapter 227. Following are the findings:

FINDINGS

1. There is sufficient evidence the EPP verifies that candidates hold the required degree at admission. [19 TAC §227.10(a)(1) & (2)]
2. There is sufficient evidence the EPP requires applicants to meet the minimum 2.50 GPA requirement or meet requirements for the 10% exception to the GPA requirement. [19 TAC §227.10(a)(3)]
3. There is sufficient evidence that the program requires applicants to meet the requirement for subject-specific semester credit hours or have a passing score on the appropriate pre-admission content test (TX PACT) at admission. [19 TAC §227.10(a)(4)]
4. Candidates consistently demonstrate English language proficiency prior to admission. [19 TAC §227.10(a)(7)]
5. Candidates consistently participate in one or more admission screen(s) to evaluate the candidate's appropriateness for the certificate sought. There is sufficient evidence that screens are scored using a rubric with a set of coherent criteria. [19 TAC §227.10(a)(8)]
6. The EPP has maintained an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher for each incoming class since the last five-year review. [19 TAC §227.19(a)]

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CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

None

FORMAL & CONTINGENCY ADMISSION

Candidate records and records in the Educator Certification Online System (ECOS) were reviewed to verify the EPP has implemented a formal admission process as required in 19 TAC §227.17 and §227.15, respectively. Following are the findings:

FINDINGS

1. There is sufficient evidence that the EPP consistently provides a written offer of admission reflecting a transparent admission date, and ensures the offer is signed by candidates. [19 TAC §227.17(b)-(d)]
2. The EPP consistently creates admission records for formally and contingently admitted candidates in the ECOS within seven calendar days of the date of admission identified in the offer letter. [19 TAC §227.17(e) & §227.15(c)]
3. Candidates are not provided coursework, training, or test approval prior to admission. [19 TAC §227.17(f) & §227.15(e)]

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

None

STANDARDS-BASED COURSEWORK

Syllabi, performance assessments, published program calendars, standards alignment charts, and information provided by the EPP in the Status Report were reviewed as evidence the EPP provides the required standards-based coursework. Evidence was reviewed for the Core Subjects w/STR EC-6 as a focus area representative of overall quality of standards-based coursework offered by the EPP. Following are the findings:

FINDINGS

1. There is sufficient evidence that candidates are consistently required to complete at least the minimum number of hours of coursework and training prior to completing the EPP. [19 TAC §228.35(b) & (c)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.37(a) & §228.53(b)]
2. The following required standards were identified in coursework:
 - The educator standards for the certificate(s) sought; and
 - The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); and
 - English Language Proficiency Standards; and
 - Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines (Teacher programs, as applicable); and
 - The skills and competencies captured in the Texas teacher standards (Teacher programs). [19 TAC §228.30] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57]

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3. There is sufficient evidence that the curriculum provided to candidates is research-based. [19 TAC §228.30(b)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(b)]
4. There is sufficient evidence the coursework provided to candidates is performance-based providing opportunities for candidates to practice skills. [19 TAC §228.35(a)(2) & §228.40(a)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(b)]

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

None

REQUIRED CURRICULUM TOPICS

Syllabi, published program calendars, transcripts, certificates of completion in candidate records, and information provided by the EPP in the Status Report and through conversations were reviewed to verify the EPP provides instruction in the additional curriculum areas required in Texas Administrative Code and/or Texas Education Code. Following are the findings:

FINDINGS

1. There is sufficient evidence candidates receive the required training in the Educators' Code of Ethics and in appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students. [19 TAC §228.30(c)(1) & (7)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(c)(1) & (7)]
2. There is insufficient evidence that training in educating students with Dyslexia is consistently provided to candidates and is provided by the approved provider. [19 TAC §228.30(c)(2)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(c)(2)]
Evidence: None of the records reviewed had a certificate of completion from TEA Learn, the TEA-approved Dyslexia provider. Conversations with program staff revealed that the approved provider did not provide the Dyslexia training, but the curriculum has since been updated to include the approved training.
3. There is sufficient evidence that training in Mental Health, Substance Abuse, & Youth Suicide is consistently provided to candidates and is provided by an approved provider. [19 TAC §228.30(c)(3)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(c)(3)]
4. There is sufficient evidence that candidates receive Instruction in
 - the skills educators are required to possess; and
 - the responsibilities educators are required to accept; and
 - the high expectations for all students in Texas; and
 - the importance of building strong classroom management skills; and
 - the framework in Texas for teacher and principal evaluation. [19 TAC §228.30(c)(4)-(6)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(c)(4)-(6)]
5. There is sufficient evidence that candidates receive the required Instruction in digital learning, virtual instruction, and virtual learning. [19 TAC §228.30(c)(8)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(c)(8)]
6. The Digital Literacy evaluation, and the related prescribed curriculum, has been provided to candidates. [19 TAC §228.30(c)(8)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(c)(8)]

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7. There is sufficient evidence that the EPP provides opportunities for candidates to demonstrate competency in instruction regarding students with disabilities, the use of proactive instructional planning techniques, and evidence-based inclusive instructional practices, as required under TEC §21.044(a-1)(1)-(3). [19 TAC §228.30(c)(9)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(c)(9)]
8. There is sufficient evidence that the EPP integrates inclusive practices for all students, including students with disabilities, and evidence-based instruction and intervention strategies throughout coursework for candidates as required under TEC §21.0443(b)(1)-(2). [19 TAC §228.11(a)(1)(J)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.11(a)(1)(J)]
9. Candidates receive instruction in the open education resources instruction materials a) included on the list of approved instructional materials maintained by the SBEC under TEC §31.022, in each subject area and grade level covered by the candidate's certification category as required under TEC, §21.044(a-1)(4). [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(c)(10)]
10. There is sufficient evidence that Teacher candidates receive reading instruction, including instruction that improves students' content-area literacy. [19 TAC §228.30(d)(2)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.57(d)(2)]

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

The EPP must revise coursework to include the required instruction as needed to meet requirements in 19 TAC §228.57 by 5 PM on Thursday, June 26, 2025.

1. **19 TAC §228.57(c)(2) / TEC §21.044(b) Required Instruction – Dyslexia:**

The EPP must require candidates to complete instruction in Dyslexia from the TEA-approved provider, TEA Learn. Retain evidence in the candidate's record per the records retention requirement.

PRE-SERVICE REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

Syllabi, benchmark documents and field-based experience (FBE) logs in candidates' records, and published information were reviewed for evidence the EPP requires Teacher candidates to complete pre-service requirements (coursework and field-based experiences) as identified in 19 TAC §228.35(b) and §228.35(e)(1) [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.41 and §228.43]. Following are the findings:

FINDINGS

1. There is sufficient evidence that candidates consistently complete pre-service coursework and training before beginning the supervised clinical experience. [19 TAC §228.35(b)(2)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.41 & §228.43(b)]
2. There is sufficient evidence that the structure of pre-service coursework and training allows candidates to complete at least 150 hours of coursework and to demonstrate proficiency in the identified pedagogical areas. [19 TAC §228.35(b)(1) & §228.35(e)(1)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.41(2)(A)-(L)]
3. There is insufficient evidence that candidates consistently complete the required number of hours of FBE during pre-service coursework and training. [19 TAC §228.35(b)(1) & §228.35(e)(1)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.41(1) & §228.43(c)-(d)]
Evidence: Two out of five candidates reviewed had completed 15 of the required 30 hours of FBE.

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4. FBE assignments and activities do not meet the requirements for completing FBE. [19 TAC §228.35(e)(1)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.43(c) & (d)]
Evidence: Two out of five candidate records reviewed contained evidence of observation hours only and did not have evidence of interactive FBE hours.
5. Teacher candidates who are late hires consistently complete pre-service coursework and training requirements within 90 business days of the hire date. [19 TAC §228.35(d)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.55(a)]

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

The EPP must revise the structure and activities required in pre-service coursework to ensure Teacher candidates complete preservice requirements and demonstrate proficiency in the identified pedagogical areas prior to authorizing the supervised clinical experience as required in 19 TAC §228.41, §228.43, and §228.55(a) & (c) by 5 PM on Thursday, June 26, 2025.

1. **19 TAC §228.41(1) & (2)(A)-(L) Pre-Service Requirements: Coursework with 19 TAC §228.43(c) & (d) Pre-Service Requirements: FBE**

The EPP must revise the FBE requirements and process to ensure candidates complete at least the required number of hours, including the required hours of active engagement, and that meet all other requirements for FBE. Retain the documents in the candidate's records per the records retention requirement.

SUPERVISED CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Syllabi, program calendars, and documentation in candidate records including placement documents, logs, observation records, mentor agreements, and training materials were reviewed as evidence the EPP consistently ensures that candidates complete the supervised clinical experience as required in 19 TAC §228.35(e) - (h) [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC Chapter 228, Subchapters E and F].

FINDINGS

Each of the five Teacher candidates completed an internship:

1. There is sufficient evidence that candidates consistently complete an internship assignment that is at least one full school year in duration with at least an average of four hours per day in the subject area of the certificate sought and is completed on an approved campus. [19 TAC §228.35(e)(2)(B) & §228.35(e)(5)-(7) & (9)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.63 & §228.73(b) & (e)]
2. There is sufficient evidence that the EPP ensures the Intern or Probationary certificate is valid during the internship. [19 TAC §228.35(e)(2)(B)(iv)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.73(a)]
3. There is insufficient evidence that the candidates completing an internship are provided support throughout the internship experience that includes:
 - A qualified and trained mentor teacher.
 - A qualified and trained field supervisor.
 - The required number and duration of formal and informal observations provided by the field supervisor.

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- Feedback and coaching from the field supervisor based on pre- and post-observation conferences and educational practices observed. [19 TAC §228.2(26), §228.35(f), §228.35(g)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.97, §228.101, §228.105, §228.109]

Evidence: Although the EPP did provide training to candidate mentors, and all mentors had a certificate matching the grade level and subject area of the candidate, the EPP had not verified the mentors met the experience or accomplishment qualifications. Likewise, although the field supervisors assigned to candidates had completed the TEA-approved field supervisor training and the EPP had verified the field supervisors met the certification and experience requirements, the EPP had not verified accomplishment as shown by student learning. Three out of five field supervisors did not have EPP field supervisor training at the time the candidates reviewed were completing an internship. There was no evidence that field supervisors conducted informal observations.

4. There is sufficient evidence that candidate proficiency in implementation of the standards for the certificate sought is consistently captured during the candidate's internship. [19 TAC §228.35(e)(2)(B)(ix)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.73(j)]
5. The EPP has not integrated inclusive practices for all students, including students with disabilities, and evidence-based instruction and intervention strategies in the internship experience. [19 TAC §228.10(a)(1)(J)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.11(a)(1)(J)]
Evidence: Records for three out of five candidates did not have evidence that proficiency in inclusive practices for all students, including students with disabilities, was captured on the observation instrument during formal observations in the internship.
6. There is sufficient evidence that candidates are consistently provided recommendations of a successful clinical experience by the campus supervisor and the field supervisor. [19 TAC §228.35(e)(2)(B)(ix)] [Effective September 1, 2024: 19 TAC §228.73(j)]

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

The EPP must revise the structure and requirements in the supervised clinical experiences as needed to ensure candidates are placed in appropriate assignments where they are able to complete the experiences with appropriate supervision and support, and that candidate proficiency is accurately captured by the EPP by 5 PM on Thursday, June 26, 2025.

1. 19 TAC §228.97, §228.101, §228.105, §228.109 Clinical Experience: Teacher Internship (Candidate Support)

The EPP must update the structure of the internship process to include:

- Verifying that mentors meet qualification requirements.
- Verifying that field supervisors meet qualification requirements.
- Providing training to field supervisors **by the EPP**.
- Informal observations, at least three per semester, which are informed by written feedback provided during post-observation conferences and include observation and feedback on targeted skills.

Retain the documents in the candidate's records per the records retention requirement.

2. 19 TAC §228.11(a)(1)(J) / TEC §21.0443(b)(1) & (2)

The EPP must update the clinical experience process to include capturing candidate proficiency in the requirements in [Texas Education Code \(TEC\), §21.0443\(b\)\(1\) and \(2\)](#).

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CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Candidate records including transcripts, program calendars, and completed benchmark documents, and data reported in ECOS, provided evidence of EPP compliance with certification requirements. [19 TAC §230.11 & §230.13] Following are the findings:

FINDINGS

1. There is sufficient evidence that candidates holding Intern or Probationary certificates consistently meet the requirements for the certificate recommended. [19 TAC §230, §230.36, & §230.37]
2. Candidates are consistently recommended for certificates in areas in which they are prepared by, and completed, the EPP. [19 TAC §228.35(e)(2)(B), §230.36, §230.37, §230.11, & §230.13]
3. There is sufficient that the EPP consistently ensures candidates complete all requirements prior to recommendation for the certificate sought. [19 TAC §230]
4. There is sufficient evidence that candidates consistently meet the English language proficiency requirement prior to being recommended for certification. [19 TAC §230.11(b)(5)]

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

None

INTEGRITY OF DATA SUBMISSION

Admission data, enrollment data, and observation data reported in the Educator Certification Online System (ECOS) by the EPP were compared with the data retained in candidates' records. Following are the findings:

FINDINGS

1. Admission data have been reported accurately according to information in candidate transcripts and admission letters. [19 TAC §229.3]
2. Candidates are consistently identified as enrolled in the area in which certificates are issued. [19 TAC §229.3]
3. Clinical experience records reported in ECOS accurately represent the related data in candidates' records. [19 TAC §229.3]
4. Observation dates and durations have been consistently reported in ECOS as detailed on observation documents. [19 TAC §229.3 & §229.4]

CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED

None

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ADVISEMENT

- Update processes to meet the revised requirements in 19 TAC Chapter 228 effective as of September 1, 2024.
- Put the date the candidate completed each requirement on the program checklist instead of just putting “complete” by it so it is easier to verify the candidate met the completion requirements in the appropriate order/time frame.
- The educational practices observed could be strengthened by providing more detail on what was observed.
- The Physical Education EC-12 (158), Health EC-12 (157), and English Language Arts & Reading 7-12 (231) exams are no longer available effective September 1, 2024. Candidates pursuing certification in these certificate areas must now be approved for the new exams 258, 257, and 331, respectively. To be certified using passing scores on exams 158, 157, or 231, candidates must apply and be recommended for certification by September 1, 2025. Additional information about the transitions of these certification exams is on the [Educator Testing](#) page on the tea.texas.gov website.
- The Special Education EC-12 and Special Education Supplemental certificates will expire and will be replaced by the Special Education Specialist EC-12 certificate. The certification exams, 161 and 163, respectively, will not be offered after August 31, 2025. Candidates will have until September 1, 2026, to be certified in the expiring certificate areas. The new Special Education Specialist EC-6 exam 186 will be available starting September 2, 2025. Be sure to attend one of the required webinars to qualify to add the new Special Education Specialist EC-12 certificate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish a process to add and/or update records in ECOS as they occur throughout the year. Set short-term goals for ensuring records are updated at least by semester and prior to recommending standard certificates.
- Review all certificate areas that the EPP no longer plans to support and request, in writing, for TEA to remove them from inventory.
- Notify the assigned specialist at TEA promptly when the EPP has staff changes in the roles of Legal Authority, Primary Point of Contact, Backup Legal Authority, or Certification Officer or when the EPP has changes in EPP contact information.
- To ensure continuity in record keeping and other related processes, maintain a procedure manual or process documents detailing EPP processes and procedures.
- Align the verbiage of the program to the verbiage of Texas Administrative Code (TAC) (ex. Field supervisor, cooperating teacher, mentor, candidate, clinical teaching, internship, practicum, etc.).
- Continue to follow the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and the State Board of Education (SBOE) meetings and/or review the minutes to ensure that the program staff is knowledgeable about the current Texas Administrative Code.
- Continue to participate in training and webinars provided by TEA to ensure that the program staff is knowledgeable about current requirements and changes in the Texas Administrative Code, including changes to EPP processes and updates to certificates and related certification exams.
- Continue to maintain communication with the TEA education specialist assigned to the program.

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CORRECTIVE ACTION COMPLETE

Evidence of Corrective Action, received at TEA on June 18, 2025, has been reviewed by TEA staff and meets requirements for compliance with Texas Education Code and/or Texas Administrative Code.