



Compliance Audit Report 2010-2011 EIT Excellence in Teaching

According to 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 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 contained in each rule.

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Texas Education Agency (TEA) program specialists, Mixon Henry, Sandra Nix, and Vanessa Alba, conducted a one year post-approval compliance audit on November 11 and 12, 2010. The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date Self-Report Submitted: October 15, 2010

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

Findings:

The advisory committee consists of fifteen (15) members: seven (7) members from school districts, one (1) member from the education service center, two members (2) from higher education, and five (5) members from business and community. The advisory committee composition meets the requirements in TAC §228.20 (b).

Meetings of the advisory committee are held twice each academic year or more often if needed. The meetings for the last academic year were conducted on March 21, 2009, December 18, 2009, and this year's first meeting was held on October 25, 2010. Agendas, minutes, and attendance records were available in the document review as evidence of compliance with TAC §228.20(b). Minutes from advisory committee meetings dated March 21, 2009, December 18, 2009, and October 25, 2010 provided verification that input was requested by program directors about specific student issues and how compliance to code could be met. This information was also verified by responses from the responding advisory committee members (4 out of 12 members) on the advisory committee questionnaire. In reviewing the minutes from the advisory committee meetings, discussions included design, delivery, evaluation, and major policy of the program as required by TAC §228.20(b). Responses from the advisory committee members' questionnaires verified their involvement as follows: designing and revising aspects of the program: 33.3% no and 66.6% yes; major policy decisions: 100% yes; overall program evaluation: 100% yes. In other items on the questionnaire, seventy-five percent (75%) of the

advisory committee members indicated that they understood Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227 and §228, which indicates from their responses that the advisory committee understands their roles and responsibilities. In questions involving program collaboration with local schools, seventy-five percent (75%) reported collaboration as good and twenty-five (25%) reported it as very good. In the question, “Does the advisory committee review the type of field-based experience provided to candidates?”, 75% responded yes and 25% responded no.

Prior to the one year post approval compliance audit, Texas Education Agency prepared and presented webinars addressing advisory committee responsibilities. A repeat of the webinar was to be presented during the compliance audit to the EIT Excellence in Teaching Advisory Committee, but no members were available to attend the opening or closing sessions. A copy of the PowerPoint was left with the program directors to be presented at the next advisory committee meeting. In discussing advisory committee meetings, the directors stated it was difficult to assemble the entire group together for meetings. To increase the number of participants, it was suggested to consider conference calls or webinars to make involvement easier. For members needing Continuing Professional Education (CPE) hours in order to renew their teaching certificates, another consideration was to issue CPE credit hours on the time spent providing input on design, delivery, and evaluation of the program’s curriculum.

Based on the evidence presented, EIT Excellence in Teaching is in compliance with TAC §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

COMPONENT II. ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10 - ADMISSION CRITERIA

Findings:

Per the EIT Excellence In Teaching’s self-report and website, in order to be admitted into the program, the candidate must have a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited university [TAC §227, 10(c)] with a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 [TAC §227.10(A)]. The basic skills requirement was addressed with the Texas Success Initiative. Additionally, a signed application [TAC §227.20(6)] must be submitted, along with a writing sample [TAC §227.10(4)]. English as a Second Language (ESL) and Bilingual candidates must also provide a writing sample in Spanish. Foreign candidates must submit a writing sample in English and take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). [TAC §227.10(5)] At this point, no foreign candidates have been accepted into the program. In addition, prospective candidate interviews were conducted utilizing a set of pre-determined questions, and a rubric is used to evaluate the candidates’ language proficiency [TAC §227.10(6)]. The aforementioned information was verified by review of the candidates’ folders, with the exception of the official transcripts from a local university. The transcripts found in the students’ folders were stamped with issued to student. A local university registrar’s office was contacted in order to clarify the university’s policy about releasing transcripts to students in non-sealed envelopes. The university representative stated that it considered any transcript released to students on the special paper an official transcript and regularly released open transcripts to students. It was determined not to penalize the program for this issue. However, in the future, it was recommended that EIT Excellence in Teaching only accept candidates’ transcripts in sealed envelopes from the university. It was recommended to include this information in EIT Excellence in Teaching’s

published admission criteria. At this point, EIT Excellence in Teaching does not require the Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) for admission into the program. No late hires have enrolled into the program, but the program is aware of the rules regarding the requirements.

There was a discussion with the directors addressing the entrance and exit of candidates. Past legal and testing issues have made it clear that general statements in the candidate's handbook were not detailed enough to avoid problems. It was suggested that the program provide specific guidelines to candidates addressing recommendations for testing, grievances with the program, and exit processes.

Program recruitment is conducted via website, career fairs, brochures, and school and community college visits.

Based on the evidence presented, EIT Excellence in Teaching is in compliance with TAC §227.10 – Admission Criteria.

COMPONENT III. CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30 - EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM

Findings:

The EIT Excellence in Teaching staff consists of one owner, and three instructors. Instructor vitas presented for credential review indicated that all three (3) instructors have doctor's degrees. Content area certifications of the instructors include Early Childhood (PK-KG), Bilingual Education (PK-8), and Elementary Self-Contained (Grades 1-8), English Language Arts 8-12 and Science 8-12. EIT Excellence in Teaching currently does not have students enrolled in Math 8-12, and therefore does not have an instructor associated with this content area. Furthermore, all instructors are certified Texas teachers. The self-report indicated qualifications for EIT Excellence in Teaching instructors include advanced degrees, five (5) years or more of teaching experience, a Texas teaching certificate and, if possible, have published scholarly journals and authored textbooks.

One hundred percent (100%) of the candidates responding (6 candidates) to their TEA questionnaire indicated that they had received a complete and clear syllabus for each module. The self-report indicated that all syllabi included a course description, goals, objectives, Texas Standards and Competencies, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) [TAC §228.30(a)], the seventeen (17) mandated TAC topics [TAC §228.30(b)] addressed by module, focused field-based experiences embedded within the modules, focused reading assignments, instructional strategies, classroom policies, assignments with calendar due dates, criteria for earning full credit, assessments, resources and textbooks, websites, articles and journals.

As evidence of compliance with TAC §228.30(a), a review was conducted of the syllabus for each module. It was found that syllabi were available for all the modules taught in the entire program and each syllabus contained the components previously mentioned. The teaching

modules exhibited evidence of in-depth and appropriate coverage of each Generalist EC-6 standard, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR). Standards, domains, and competencies were also verified through the self-report, student teacher and cooperating teacher responses to the questionnaires, as well as through the course alignment charts required by TEA. [TAC §228.30(a)] Module procedures and candidate expectations were provided at the initiation of each module through a course notification which explained the requirements for completion of the module, deadlines, missing clock hours and assignments, and intern responsibilities. An agenda for each class sessions was also included. In addition, other materials provided for review included detailed instructor notes and assessments. Indicators were present such as latest research articles printed from the Internet that the curriculum is updated frequently. While, the standards, competencies, and TEKS were included in each syllabus, the 17 mandated curriculum topics were not transparent to the learners. It was suggested that these topics be highlighted where appropriate in each syllabi. The grading process had clear criteria, but used terms “proficient” and “not proficient” to indicate success or failure. It was suggested that a grading variance with several levels of success and failure to more accurately demonstrate skill mastery of the candidate.

Candidate sign-in sheets were presented as evidence of student attendance for each class session. Candidates who missed class sessions were required to make them up. Candidate artifacts such as projects, completed assignments, and progress reports were also available for review.

In reviewing the responses from the student teacher/intern questionnaire about how effective instruction was in covering the seventeen (17) mandated curriculum topics, the candidates indicated that instruction in the following areas were extremely effective: Code of Ethics, theories of how people learn, and conducting parent conferences. Areas where candidates would like to see more emphasis were: teacher’s responsibilities for administering the TAKS examination, process of curriculum development, and standards and teaching strategies for students designated as gifted and talented.

The cooperating teachers/mentors responded in their questionnaire (4 responders) that they would like to see more instruction in teacher’s responsibilities for administering the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) examination, process of curriculum development, laws and standards regarding students with special education needs, standards and teaching strategies for students designated as gifted and talented and as limited English proficient, and conducting parent conferences.

Based on the evidence presented, EIT Excellence in Teaching is in compliance with TAC §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 program coursework, assignments, and assessments were incorporated within the internship and delivered in a face-to-face format. It was documented that 300+ hours were required for completion of the program.[TAC §228.35(a)(3)] Thirty clock hours of field-based experiences in diverse setting were addressed by focused observation activities which included connecting observations to TEKS and educator standards, writing reflective journals, participating in classroom discussions, and interviewing a teacher. EIT Excellence in Teaching retained the documentation for training clock hours and grades within the program electronic system to provide quick information to the candidates. In addition, the program was required to complete a TEA required Chart of Program Hours prior to the compliance audit. Documentation was provided to verify that 110 clock hours were completed prior to the internship. This was verified by an electronic spreadsheet kept by the program director. [TAC §228.35(a) (3)(B)] The placement for the internship matched the training and coursework for each candidate.

The EIT Excellence in Teaching mentors were all Texas certified teachers with at least three years of experience. Each had received mentor training provided by the EIT Excellence in Teaching program using TXBESS materials. [TAC §228.35(e)] The program provided CPE credit for mentors along with \$250 stipend per semester. Evidence of assigned mentors was provided by the sign-in sheets of mentor training provided by the program [TAC §228.35(f)]

There was only one field supervisor to perform the observations for all program interns. The training for the field supervisor is provided by the program. The initial contact with interns was made within the first three weeks of the candidate's assignment. The field supervisor's log and program spreadsheet recorded the dates and times of the first contact with the interns. The observation instrument was an abridged PDAS form. The field supervisor observed the interns the required three formal observations (two observations during the first semester and one the second) and all were documented by observation forms in the candidates' folders. The observations were 45 minutes in length with an interactive feedback session following the observation. Intern questionnaires revealed that 80% of the interns perceived that the field supervisor provided suggestions about how to improve their instruction and provided additional coaching as needed. The starting times and ending times of the observations were not recorded on every form, just general timeframes were recorded. The forms were changed by the program directors to identify the specific times of the observations. The first observation was conducted within the first six weeks of the assignment for all interns. Written feedback was provided to the campus administrator according to the self-report. This was confirmed by TEA's Principals questionnaires with 100% responding that written feedback was provided. The directors expressed difficulty in meeting with the principals because of their busy schedules [TAC §228.35(f)]

Continuing support for candidates and interns occurred in three ways: continuous feedback about the progress of the candidates in coursework and testing both verbally and written; Intervention Plans which allowed for additional meetings to address weak areas; and additional

observations to provide coaching in specified areas. For unsuccessful TExES testers, tutoring services were offered. [TAC §228.35(f)]

Specific comments by interns on their questionnaires about the strengths of the program were as follows: “Program is very rigorous...classes are detailed and allow for re-teaching when we don’t clearly understand something.”; “The program is small ...the instructor is able to get to know us better and get to know each of our needs.”; “They have professionalism and work to see that we fulfill all state requirements.” Areas of needed improvement identified by the interns were directed toward scheduling issues. “I think they could improve with class scheduling and class offerings”. In response to whether the intern would recommend EIT Excellence in Teaching to other potential candidates; five (5) out of six (6) responses stated “yes.”

Program concerns about the availability of jobs in today’s teaching job market were expressed. It was recommended to the program to explore clinical teaching as an alternative method for candidates to complete the teaching practicum and earn the standard certificate.

Based on evidence presented, EIT Excellence in Teaching is in compliance with TAC §228.35 – Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training.

COMPONENT V. PROGRAM EVALUATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

Findings:

Assessments of educators were performed with select response tests at the end of each module. Assignments were graded on criteria stated in the course syllabi with mastery at 80%. If a candidate was unsuccessful on an assignment or exam, the candidate was allowed the opportunity to retake the exam or repeat the assignment. The program also uses performance based assessments. [TAC §228.40(a)] Documentation of assessments is being kept for five years in the students’ files. Candidate’s readiness to test is determined by their success on training modules and by evaluation of each individual’s progress by the instructors.

EIT Excellence in Teaching evaluates the instructional modules based on candidates’ input and test results. All participants associated with the program are requested to provide feedback which provides a comprehensive look at the program from multi-perspectives. Involved in the EIT Excellence in Teaching questionnaires are interns, mentors, campus administrators, district administrators, and advisory committee members. The program directors correlated the data and presented it to the advisory committee. The advisory committee reviewed and evaluated the results of the surveys as a part of the overall program’s evaluation. The advisory committee then provided feedback to the program staff. Since this is the first year of operation for the program, the process of program evaluation was in the inaugural stages. A comprehensive evaluation will take place when the first internship cohort completes its cycle.

Based on the evidence presented, EIT Excellence in Teaching is in compliance with TAC §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Pass Rate Performance: | 2009-2010 70% Pass Rate |
| Overall: | 50% |
| | |
| Demographics: | |
| Female | 50% |
| White | 0% |
| Certification Areas At Risk | |
| English Language Arts 8-12 | 0% |
| PPR EC-12 | 50% |

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency Compliance Audit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any component, please consult the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and initiate actions to correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A Compliance Status Report will be required in sixty days.

General program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement and do not require follow-up.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

None at this time.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.

- Provide training for the advisory committee with the use of the TEA PowerPoint to ensure understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- Use technology to facilitate advisory committee meetings; conference calls and webinars offer a simple solution for reaching members who are unable to attend in person.

- Provide Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits to mentors for the service of mentoring the interns; it allows credit to be earned for both the mentor training and the mentorship in accordance to TAC §232; also consider this same option for advisory committee members serving on the committee. Since EIT Excellence in Teaching is a CPE provider, it is allowed to issue CPE credit to teachers, administrators, and other certified administrators per TAC §232.850 (2) (3A,D,J) and 232.860 (7).
- Apply for clinical teaching to provide alternatives to candidates who cannot obtain internship positions.
- Amend the observation form to reflect the time of the observation, specifically to identify the 45 minutes of observation required by TAC §228.25. Consider alternative methods of supplying the intern's formal observation form to principals, either by email or delivered to and signed for by secretaries at the campus
- Re-evaluate the process for identifying the readiness of candidates to test, so program accountability is not negatively affected by test results.
- Consider purchasing and using the representative forms of the TExES exams to help candidates prepare for testing.
- Accept only official transcripts delivered in sealed envelopes or mailed directly to the program.
- Provide assessment grading criteria that demonstrates a variance to differentiate the various levels of success
- Create a process for exiting and entering of educators into the program; this process should limit your accountability for testing and other issues.
- Disaggregate the 17 mandated curriculum topics into each applicable module so students will become more aware of their presence and importance.