



## Compliance Audit Report 2010-2011 Sul Ross State University–Alpine

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](http://www.tea.state.tx.us) for details contained in each rule.

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Program Specialists, Sandra Nix and Dr. Mary Black, conducted a Texas Education Agency (TEA) Compliance Audit on October 7 and 8, 2010. Two programs were reviewed: the Generalist EC-6 and the Principal certification program. The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Date Self-Report Submitted: September 10, 2010

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

#### **Findings:**

Strong support was indicated by the governing body per TAC §228.20(c) of Sul Ross State University-Alpine as indicated by the President of the University, Provost, and Dean of the College of Education's participation in various aspects of the compliance audit. In addition, seven superintendents serving on the advisory committee were present during the opening session and gave testimony supporting the Sul Ross State University – Alpine teacher education program. Each commented that he/she felt that Sul Ross State University-Alpine "listened" to their input and concerns and made efforts to be responsive.

The Sul Ross State University-Alpine's Advisory Committee consisted of thirty-one (31) members: eighteen (18) members from school districts, six (6) members from higher education, two (2) members from an education service center, and five (5) members from business and community. The first of two meetings for the 2010-2011 academic year was conducted on September 8, 2010, and the second meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2011. Agendas, minutes and attendance records were available in the document review as evidence of compliance for the September meeting. This information was also verified in the advisory committee questionnaire. Agenda, minutes, and attendance records for the 2009-2010 academic year's advisory meetings were present in the document review as evidence of previous year's

compliance. Advisory committee membership composition and meeting schedules meet the requirements of TAC §228.20(b).

Twenty-two advisory committee members out of 31 responded to the advisory committee's questionnaire. Of the responding committee members, 66% (14 respondents) indicated that they had served on the advisory committee from one to three years, while 19% (4) indicated they had served for more than four years. The members also indicated that they participated in curriculum design (75%), policy decisions (75%) and program evaluation (85%) as per TAC §228.20(b). While no discussion record of field-based experiences was located in the advisory committee agendas or minutes as required by TAC §228.20(d), ninety-five percent (95%) of the committee members responding to the advisory committee questionnaire indicated that field-based experiences were discussed.

In addition to the Sul Ross State University-Alpine's Teacher Advisory Committee, the university has a Teacher Education Council whose charge is to assist in the general evaluation of all aspects of the teacher education program including recommending policies and guidelines to meet the standards of the university, reviewing the teacher certification programs, recommending institutional standards for student teaching, internships and practicums. The membership of this committee is comprised of the Chairs of various departments that participate in the teacher certification program. The membership includes the Dean of Library and Information Technologies, the Director of Teacher Education, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Dean of Professional Studies, the Dean of Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, two auxiliary members (one is a student designated by the Student Government Association), and three staff members. This council also meets twice per academic year. In reviewing the membership of the Teacher Education Council and the Sul Ross State University-Alpine's Advisory Committee, it was noted that members served on both committees to ensure cross-cooperation and communication.

In the advisory committee questionnaire, the members were asked to identify the strengths of the Sul Ross State University-Alpine's teacher program. The committee members indicated that the strengths included: small class size, strong support from the faculty, faculty's personal relationships with students, positive relationships with the school districts, and a strong core curriculum.

Areas that were cited by the advisory committee as areas in need of improvement were student recruitment, student teaching practicum (increase to a semester), and addition of certification fields in special education and bilingual education.

**Based on the evidence presented, Sul Ross State University-Alpine is in compliance with Texas Administration Code §228.20.**

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

### **Findings:**

Admission requirements for both the initial and principal certification programs were found in Sul Ross State University-Alpine's self-report, university catalog, and website. In addition, a statement of non-discrimination was found on the university website as evidence of compliance with TAC §227.10(c).

In the opening presentation, enrollment statistics for the undergraduate program indicated that seventy-five (75) candidates were currently enrolled. The principal program consisted of eighty-four (84) candidates. The total enrollment in all programs was 402. It was noted in the opening presentation by Sul Ross State University-Alpine's personnel, that the education department has very definite goals and benchmarks for the curriculum and the overall program. Among the goals is increasing enrollment in the undergraduate teacher certification program.

### **Initial Certification Program:**

In order to be admitted into the Sul Ross State University–Alpine's teacher education program, the candidate must have completed sixty (60) semester credit hours applicable toward a degree and certification, and have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or better on a 4.0 scale. The potential candidate must have completed nine of the 12 hours of required English courses with an overall GPA of 2.5 or better. [TAC §227.10(a)]. Also, the potential candidate cannot have any incomplete grades or grades lower than a "C" in a teaching field(s), area(s) of specialization, or in education courses required for certification. Oral and written proficiency are evaluated by Comm. 1202 or Theater 2304 with a grade of "C" or better as evidence of compliance with TAC §227.10(5). Basic skills requirements were met through America College Testing (ACT) or Texas Success Initiative (TSI) scores. A review of the candidates' folders verified the grade point and basic skill requirements were present as evidence of compliance with TAC §227.10(4). An application for admission to the teacher education program signed by the applicant was present in the document review items and on file in the individual candidate's folder as evidence of compliance with TAC §227.20(6). An unofficial transcript was found in the candidate's individual folder while the official transcript was kept in the registrar's office.

The self-report and review of the candidates' folders indicated that no candidates were admitted that required verification of the ability to speak and understand the English language [TAC §227.10(e)]. The university also indicated that they did not admit any applicants under the 10% cohort rule nor do they have any candidates in Career and Technology [TAC §227.10(7)(d); TAC §227.10(3)(b)]. This information was verified in the document review. The university did indicate that they had five (5) or less interns or probationary certified candidates that met the criteria of "late hire." Sul Ross has written policies for interns who are hired late in their post baccalaureate program. [228.35(c)] Candidates' files also confirmed evidence of "late hire" completion of program requirements within the time specified by Texas Administrative Code.

### **Principal Certification Program:**

Admission to the Principal Certification Program requires that the applicant submit an application through the *Texas Apply* system [TAC §227.20(6)] and have an evaluation of their transcript to meet the 2.5 GPA requirement. [TAC §227.10(a)]. The principal candidates admitted to receive a Master of Education degree with a major in school administration must meet the admission requirements for graduate studies, which includes holding a bachelor's degree from an institution approved by a nationally recognized and accrediting agency. [TAC §241.5(a)] The candidate must supply evidence of a teaching certificate [TAC §241.20(3)] and service records reflecting two years creditable teaching experience in an accredited school [TAC §241.20(4)]. Evidence of these requirements was found in the principal candidates' records. Principal candidates are also admitted into the program that have previously earned a Master's degree and are only seeking courses necessary for principal certification. The admission requirements are the same except the candidate does not have to seek admittance to the graduate school.

### **Recruitment:**

Sul Ross State University-Alpine disseminates information to all potential candidates through their website, catalogue, career fairs, and school and community college visits. Undergraduate recruitment includes campus tours for high school students from surrounding school districts. These student guests are personally greeted by the University President, Dr. Richard Maestas. A number of pamphlets and brochures were available for review. The participants in the Principal Certification Program are recruited through personal referrals, contacts with school districts particularly with superintendents, regional service centers, and recruiters in San Antonio, El Paso and in the Valley areas.

**Based on the evidence presented, Sul Ross State University- Alpine is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227.10-Admission Requirements.**

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

### **Findings:**

The full time Department of Education faculty consists of ten (10) members, one departing director, one (1) interim director, seven (7) instructors, and one (1) certification specialist. Six (6) faculty members teach in the undergraduate teacher preparation program, while two (2) full time faculty members teach in the principal certification program. Faculty vitas presented for credential review indicated that seven (7) had doctor's degrees and two (2) had master's degrees. Furthermore, six (6) were certified Texas teachers and two (2) were certified teachers from other states.

**Initial Certification Program:**

One hundred percent (100%) of the student teachers indicated that they had been provided with a clear and concise course syllabus. The self-report indicated that all syllabi included instructor contact information, course description, goals, objectives, Texas Standards and Competencies, TEKS, 17 mandated TAC topics addressed by course, classroom policies, and assignments with calendar due dates. As evidence of compliance with TAC §228.30(a), a review was conducted of course syllabi. It was found that a similar format was used by all instructors and focused on detailing the information identified in the self-report as required in all syllabi. While the standards, competencies, and TEKS were included in each syllabus, the 17 mandated curriculum topics were not singled out by course. It is suggested that these topics be included as a component in the appropriate syllabi.

Coverage of the 17 curriculum topics [TAC228.30(b)], Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR), Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), Standards, Domains, and Competencies were verified through the self-report, student teacher and cooperating teacher responses to their questionnaires, syllabi review, as well as through the course alignment charts required by TEA. [TAC §228.30(a)]

In reviewing the questionnaire responses from the student teachers/interns about how effective they felt that instruction was in covering the 17 mandated topics, the student teachers/interns indicated that instruction in the following areas was extremely effective: code of ethics, child and adolescent development, instructional methods for motivating students, using Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in the content area, theories on how student learn, instructional technology, laws and standards regarding students with special needs were identified to name a few. Areas where candidates would like to see more emphasis were: conducting parent conferences, using assessments, reading strategies across the content areas, dealing with students with limited English proficiency, and the teacher's responsibilities for the TAKS test.

The cooperating teachers/mentors indicated in their questionnaire that they would like to see more instruction in conducting parent conferences, using assessments, and in dealing with limited English proficiency students.

**Principal Certification Program:**

According to the alignment chart submitted, the course work for the principal certification is aligned to the required standards and competencies for principals [TAC §241.15]. All candidates are required to attend an approved review course for the TExES Principal Examination.

**Based on evidence presented, Sul Ross State University- Alpine 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:**

**Initial Certification Program:**

The Generalist EC-6 program is delivered primarily face-to-face in a three block format. Block I focuses on reading skills for content areas, child development and learning theories. Block II focuses on curriculum and instruction and methods and materials for classroom teachers. Block III focuses on principles of education, classroom management, and student teaching. Block III serves as a competency capstone course reviewing all curriculum content and skills with extra emphasis on Code of Ethics. The total hours reported in the Hours Verification Chart for a Generalist EC-6 certificate, middle school and secondary certification areas were 310 clock hours. This exceeds the required state minimum of 300 clock hours. [TAC228.35 (a) (3)]. Evidence of compliance with clock hours was found in the students' degree plans in the student records.

Sul Ross State University-Alpine requires a minimum of 40 clock hours of field-based experiences prior to student teaching/internship. Again, this exceeds the mandated 30 clock hour minimum established in TAC §228.35(d). It was noted during the candidate folder review that there was no documented evidence present for field-based experiences or first contact by the field supervisor. However, in discussions with the directors and faculty of the program, it was discovered that the field-experiences were covered in the detailed description of the block courses. During the 2009-2010 academic year, the field-experience observations forms were kept at the individual campuses and the candidates completed them on-site and left them at the campus. Then the campus staff sent them to the Sul Ross State University-Alpine's instructors. The instructors evaluated the results of the observations and assigned grades to the candidates which were recorded in the instructors' grade book. These recorded grades were evidence of completion of the field-observations. [TAC §228.35(d)(1)] However, beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year, a revised method for collecting field-experience hours is being utilized. Each candidate will keep an individual log of his/her observation hours which will be validated by the observed teacher's initials. When the required number of hours are completed, the candidate will present the log to the respective instructor for evaluation. After evaluation, the field-based log will then be placed in the candidate's file. According to the self-report and student teacher/interns' responses in their questionnaires, reflective journals, written assignments, and class discussions were used to reinforce the field-based experiences.

Sul Ross State University-Alpine requires each candidate to complete a 12-week, full day teaching assignment or a 180 day internship. [TAC §228.35(d)(2)] Included in the *Handbook for Student Teachers, Field Supervisors, and Mentor/Cooperating Teacher* was a weekly progression schedule of the student teacher's duties as he/she assume more responsibility toward total teaching responsibility in weeks 4-10. Also contained in the handbook were responsibilities for the interns, cooperating teacher/mentor and field supervisor. [TAC §228.35(e) and TAC §228.35(f)] A copy of the Educator's Code of Ethics was included in the handbook with a Statement of Affirmation that the student teacher/intern must sign. A copy of the handbook was provided in the document review.

Evidence was found in the candidates' folders of support to the student teachers/interns by field supervisors during the second and third year of the probationary certificates. A Student Teacher Assignment chart contained information such as school, grade assignment, principal name, cooperating teacher/mentor name, field supervisor, and the initial campus assignment date.

The university has a total of fourteen (14) field supervisors. All field supervisors are certified teachers with many years of public school service. Twenty percent (20%) of the field supervisors indicated that they had been involved in field supervision for more than seven (7) years. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the student teachers/interns reported that the field supervisors were effective or very effective. However, the cooperating teachers/mentors, in their questionnaires, indicated that they would like more contact with the Sul Ross State University-Alpine's staff. The two principals who responded to the principal questionnaire indicated that they had not yet received written or verbal feedback about the student teachers/interns from the field supervisors since the student teachers/interns had just started their new assignments.

One hundred percent (100%) of the cooperating teachers/mentors indicated that they had received training either through an orientation from Sul Ross State University-Alpine, their school district, or from the regional service center in addition to receiving the handbook. An online Mentor/Supervisor training program that incorporates TXBess and PDAS training was developed by Sul Ross State University-Alpine to address the distance issue with the cooperating teachers/mentors. Since Sul Ross State University-Alpine is located in a remote part of West Texas, the participating cooperating teachers/mentors are assigned to campuses that cover a large area that includes El Paso, Abilene, Midland, and Region 18 Education Service Center areas, so an online training program will be an asset to the Sul Ross State University-Alpine's program. The new online training program was available for review by the TEA staff. [TAC §228.35(e)]

In reviewing the candidates' folders, evidence of a minimum of three formal observations conducted at prescribed intervals was present in the form of completed observation form as required by TAC §228.35(f)(2) and TAC §228.35(f)(1)(2). In addition to school districts in the Big Bend area, many candidates student teach or intern three to five hours away in the El Paso, Midland, San Angelo and Wimberly areas. The field supervisors drive to visit each one on a regular basis. Student teachers and their mentors confirmed in their questionnaires that formal observations were 45 minutes or more in duration [TAC §228.35(f)] followed by an interactive conference. However, the previous observation instrument used during the 2009-2010 academic year did not have a place to record the start or stop time of the observation. It was also noted that the observation forms were not signed by the candidate as evidence of receipt or conferencing [TAC §228.35(f)]. The distribution on the observation form also did not indicate that the administrator received a copy as required by TAC §228.35(f). However, beginning the 2010-2010 academic year, Sul Ross is using a new observation form which contains all information specified in TAC §228.35 including distribution to the campus administrator and meets the requirements of Senate Bill 174 and the standards for accreditation regarding frequency, duration, and quality of field observations.

### **Principal Certification Program:**

To receive a Master's degree and certification, the candidate must complete 39 semester credit hours (1755 clock hours) with a 195 clock hour practicum, and a comprehensive examination the last semester. A grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale with no grade lower than a "C" is required. For students who already possess a Master's degree in education from an accredited institution who seek only principal certification, the candidate is required to complete 30 semester credit hours (1350 clock hours) with a 195 clock hour practicum.

The principal certification program is delivered in a combination of distance learning, face-to-face, and online formats. Approximately 1/3 of the courses in the program are taught with each format. Campus-based classes are held 4 weekends per semester from 9:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and from 8:00 a.m. to noon on Sunday. Web-enhanced classes are held two weekends of the month. The remainder of the program is taught online. One distance education class is taught in Alpine and another section is taught at Eastwood Middle School in Ysleta ISD, El Paso. There is a concerted effort to present more coursework online for all their professional certification programs and the Reading Specialist program is only a few courses away from this goal.

In the field supervisor questionnaire, a comment was provided that the field supervisors visit the school once, and conduct two group meetings each semester in each region where there are principal candidates. Another comment indicated that field supervisor did visit the principal intern and tour their schools and meet with their campus supervisor to ensure that the internship was going well. Another field supervisor indicated that he/she always meets with the interns after a meeting with their campus supervisor. It was obvious from discussions with the faculty that supervision of the principal candidates was being conducted. However, for the academic year 2009-2010, no formal written observations were found in the principal candidates' folders or logs as evidence of compliance. The first contact, observations, and delivery of the observation form to the administrator also were not documented. Under the 2009 version of TAC §228, the code was vague as to the observation requirements for principal candidates. With the 2010 revision of the TAC §228, observation requirements are more specific. Sul Ross is aware of the revised observation reporting requirements and has taken steps to be in full compliance.

All candidates in any certification program who may be struggling with the coursework may receive assistance via the writing center, one-stop tutoring center, and the recently initiated graduate and undergraduate centers. In addition, the Sul Ross faculty is always available for one-on-one assistance. One of the strengths of the Sul Ross program is the small number of students (10-12) per faculty member.

**Based on the evidence presented, Sul Ross State University-Alpine is in compliance with TAC §228.35 Program Delivery and Ongoing Support.**



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

**Findings:**

**Initial Certification Program:**

Sul Ross State University-Alpine benchmarks undergraduate educator preparation students' progress utilizing a three-block system. Each of the block's courses assesses mastery of competencies covered in the courses through the use of quizzes, tests, and review of competencies. Specific courses are required to be successfully completed in each block before a student can proceed to the next block. Students must meet with advisors at the end of each block to ensure that all requirements are met [TAC §228.40(a)]. The student teaching experience is evaluated through case studies and scenarios and serves as a capstone experience of the program. Sul Ross State University - Alpine also utilizes *Certify Teacher*, a software program, as an evaluation tool of a student's progress. Its use is embedded in all education block courses. Successful passing of the "Examination Mode," a five hour simulated exam covering all PPR competencies, during Block III is one indicator of a student's readiness to test [TAC §228.40(b)].

**Principal Certification Program:**

The principal interns' progress is benchmarked through a monthly log of hours they complete and submit by the 10<sup>th</sup> working day of each month. The principal intern chooses six (6) competencies in addition to the seven that are required by the University upon which to focus their practicum work. They also must complete a monthly critique on their discoveries during the practicum. A minimum of two group meetings are held with the principal certification faculty. Documentation is kept of these meetings in the principal candidate's notebooks [TAC §228.40(a)]. The principal candidate's readiness to test is determined by completion of coursework, required activities, and the practice tests [TAC §228.40(b)].

The overall teacher preparation program is evaluated by the faculty and advisory committee each fall and spring using a variety of data sources, including TExES scores, formal student course evaluations, quality effectiveness rubrics for online courses, summative data from principal internships, and others. Careful attention is paid to course alignment and sequence [TAC §228.40(c)].

Student records are kept in both paper and electronic formats for five years in a secure environment. The record keeping supplied in the document review was complete and well organized. [TAC §228.40(d)].

**Based on the evidence presented, Sul Ross State University-Alpine is in compliance with TAC §228.40 Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.**

## Senate Bill 174/TAC §229 Compliance

### Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

<b>Pass Rate Performance:</b>	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
	80% Pass Rate	80% Pass Rate	70% Pass Rate
Overall:	94%	91%	90%
<b>Certification Areas At Risk</b>			
Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-12	76.5%		
Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities 8-12	73.3%		
Physical Education EC-12	75%		
Science 8-12		0%	
History 8-12		50%	50%
Social Studies 8-12		50%	
Spanish Oral Proficiency			50%

## PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

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 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: A Progress Report will be required in 60 days.**

None at this time.

### **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: No progress report is necessary.**

- Offer a stand alone six clock hour test preparation session for both initial and professional certifications.
- Identify in the syllabi, where applicable, the 17 mandated curriculum topics which will be emphasized in the course.
- Continue observations, feedback, and support to second and third year probationary interns with documentation in each intern's folder.
- Continue implementation of the revised field-experience log for initial certification candidates and the revised observation form (both initial and principal certification programs).