



## One Year Post-Approval Compliance Audit 2010-2011 Texas Institute for Teacher Education

According to Texas Administrative Code §228.10, "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 required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all educator preparation programs in the state. Please see the complete Texas Administrative Code at [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us) for details.

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**County-District Number:** 061701

Texas Education Agency (TEA) program specialists Mixon Henry and Dr. Mary Black conducted a Texas Education Agency compliance audit on May 23 - 25, 2011.

Date Self-Report Submitted: August 31, 2010

### Data Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A review of documents, syllabi, online courses, and curriculum correlations charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition, electronic questionnaires were sent to Texas Institute for Teacher Education (TxITE) participants by TEA staff. A total of 26 out of 73 requests to complete the questionnaires were received, or 36% response rate. The responses included three (3) out of three (3) advisory committee members, ten (10) out of forty-four (44) educator candidates; nine (9) out of thirteen (13) mentors/cooperating teachers, and four (4) out of thirteen (13) principals. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence.

The following are the findings and recommendations for program improvement.

### Opening and Closing Sessions:

The Opening Session on May 23, 2011, was attended by two people, which included Dr. John Doaks, Owner and Director of Texas Institute for Teacher Education and Keith Doaks, Director of Technology for Texas Institute for Teacher Education. The same two individuals attended the Closing Session on May 25, 2011.

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

### **Findings:**

Prior to the site visit an email list of three advisory members were supplied by Texas Institute for Teacher Education to the Texas Education Agency. However, in the first self-report five members were listed, then seven members were given in the revised self-report. The additional names in each case represented the public school category of the advisory committee. This discrepancy was due to increased advisory committee membership which will continue to increase as the program's outreach continues. Since the Texas Institute for Teacher Education is an online program, advisory committee membership comes from various parts of the state.

The advisory committee consists of seven members as listed in the revised self-report: four (4) from a school district; two (2) from higher education; and one (1) from business and community. The composition of the advisory committee meets the requirements of TAC §228.20(b). However, the advisory committee and Texas Institute for Teacher Education would benefit from increased quantity and depth of membership by including school district human resource personnel, campus mentors, and interns. According to the self-report, advisory committee meetings were held on September 7, 2010, December 11, 2010, and May 13, 2011. Two or more meetings were held in an academic year as required by TAC §228.20(b). As areas of concerns are identified and feedback is requested by program staff, additional meetings are held. Meetings were first held via conference calls. As a result, documentation of meetings, attendance, and feedback was difficult and inconsistent to verify. Next, the Texas Institute of Teacher Education held meetings using Skype and the internet via the Wiki. This process allowed the required documentation of attendance, agendas, minutes, and feedback from advisory committee members to be more efficient and precise. From that point forward, the agendas and attendance records (i.e., by list of attendees on the minutes) were available and examined during the document review as evidence of compliance. Minutes of the meetings were kept electronically to confirm the level of advisory committee member involvement [TAC §228.20(b)]. The minutes from advisory committee meetings record and reflect the participation of members in the analysis of program curriculum, design, evaluation, performance, improvement, and field-based experiences [TAC §228.35(d)]. Additional items viewed on the wiki website of The Texas Institute for Teacher Education included: past advisory committee meetings (Spring of 2010), Skype tutorial, TEA Advisory Committee Training, voting for Advisory Committee Bylaws, Advisory Committee Training Completion survey, and Data Analysis Review Event (DARE), which will be discussed under Component Five.

In reviewing feedback from the TEA questionnaires, three out of three advisory committee members responded to the electronic questionnaire sent by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) prior to the visit. Two of three of the responding committee members indicated they had served on the advisory committee one or more years or since the inception of the program. All stated that they were familiar with TAC Chapters §227, §228, and §229. In addition, All members responded accurately that the types of teaching practicum offered by the program included internship and clinical teaching.

Furthermore, all three of the respondents indicated that they do participate in designing or revising the educator preparation program's curriculum and in evaluating data for the purpose of preparing an improvement plan for the program. From evidence gathered from the self-report, TEA questionnaires, and feedback from advisory committee members' wiki responses, input is requested by Texas Institute for Teacher Education on issues of major policies, field base experience, and overall evaluation. Supporting documentation of this was found in advisory committee meeting minutes from September 7, 2010. Further documentation can be found on the wiki site for Texas Institute for Teacher Education, including past advisory committee meeting minutes, Texas Education Agency (TEA) advisory committee training, posting of feedback by members, and evaluation data form program. There is also a link for voting on program issues. As the program continues to grow, additional processes will be implemented to capture and document the input of advisory committee. Since this is a new method of holding advisory committee meetings, it will continuously move in a direction to fit the members' busy schedules while still providing access to information and input.

Because of the importance of the advisory committee's contributions and since there are ongoing revisions being made to the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), it is recommended that yearly training, such as that provided by the TEA, continue to be provided to the advisory committee members.

**Based on the evidence presented above, Texas Institute for Teacher Education is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS.**

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

### **Findings:**

Texas Institute for Teacher Education uses the state requirements for admission to an educator certification program, including the following: baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited university; 2.5 Grade Point Average (GPA) or at least a 2.5 GPA in the last 60 semester hours; successful basic skills exams on the Compass or Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) or an exemption allowed with Texas Success Initiative (TSI). Official transcripts are kept electronically in candidates' files. The application form requires demographic information, academic and work history. An interview is utilized and evaluated by a rubric which further screens applicants, fulfilling TAC§ 227.10 (6). These documents are located in the electronic candidate folders. As a matter of policy, out-of-country applicants must have the required transcript evaluation and pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam. Additionally, two references are required. Admissions criteria are published on the program website. Fewer than five students have been admitted with GPAs lower than 2.5, but the median GPA is 3.21.

Fourteen new candidates were admitted to the program during the past academic year. With this being a new program, a finisher list will be compiled with approximately 12 candidates. On

the electronic questionnaires received from Texas Institute for Teacher Education candidates, three had passed the PACT and 11 were admitted without the PACT. Candidates who were admitted without the PACT received content preparation from the program prior to TExES content testing.

**Based on the evidence presented above, Texas Institute for Teacher Education is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10 – Admission Criteria.**

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

#### **Findings:**

Four charts showing alignment of standards and TEKS to curriculum modules and activities were prepared by Texas Institute for Teacher Education and reviewed by TEA program specialists during the document review. All required standards and TEKS were shown to be present in the Texas Institute for Teacher Education curriculum. The charts document the standards alignment for Special Education, Bilingual Supplemental, Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities, and the 17 mandated topics in Texas Administrative Code §228.30.

Ten (10) teaching candidates responded to electronic questionnaires from TEA. Not all ten (10) reported receiving instructions in all topics from question number nine of the questionnaire. With the understanding that Texas Institute for Teacher Education is organized in a self-paced online modular model, responses correspond to where they are in the program at the time of the questionnaire. The majority of the responding candidates (100% - 90% of candidates, varying from topic item to topic item) noted all nineteen topics items in their curriculum. In reviewing the documentation at Texas Institute for Teacher Education, it was clear from syllabi and candidate records that not only are the topics addressed, but were assessed by the program. These assessments are kept for documentation of progress made by the candidate. Only two candidates identified areas for improvement in the curriculum: 1) responsibilities for administering the TAKS exam; 2) and the process for curriculum development. All 10 candidates responded that they felt prepared by the educator preparation program on all other identified topic items.

Syllabi for each content area in which candidates are currently seeking certification were examined during the document review. Domains and competencies were listed on the syllabi. Assignments and assessments are also included in syllabi for each course. All responding candidates stated they were supplied with clear and complete syllabi. Grades are monitored by the Texas Institute for Teacher Education's director and technology director, with successful completion of each course required prior to continuing to the next course.

There are seven modules that focus specifically on special education content and pedagogy. The modules are identified by numbers similar to college course number system. Module ME 531 provides an introduction to multicultural special education. This seminar is a study of individuals with unique learning needs, particularly students from culturally and linguistically

diverse backgrounds who have mild to severe disabilities. Program candidates spend a minimum of fifteen (15) hours in a school setting. ME 532 deals with teaching students with diverse cultural, linguistic, and exceptional learning needs. The course introduces effective literacy instruction for EC-12 students with cultural and linguistic diversity. Seminar participants are introduced to the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol as a model for guiding literacy instruction for English language learners. The course requires a minimum of fifteen (15) hours in a school setting as an observer/participant. ME 533 Assessment and Instructional Planning: Teaching Students with Diverse Cultural, Linguistic, and Exceptional Learning Needs is a study of formal/informal local and state assessment practices that guide instructional planning for students, especially for those with diverse cultural, linguistic, and exceptional learning needs, including students with mild to severe disabilities. Formal coursework begins with an introductory survey of formative and summative assessment instruments/techniques designed to inform classroom instruction. Program candidates develop skills in the administration/interpretation of curriculum-based assessments and progress monitoring tools. The seminar culminates with the development of differentiated, UDL-compliant lesson plans directly linked to the objectives of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). ME 534 Teaching the TEKS to Students with Diverse Cultural, Linguistic, and Exceptional Learning Needs is a study of standards-based curriculum and instructional methodologies effective for students with diverse cultural, linguistic, and exceptional learning needs. Program candidates develop skills in teaching all content area TEKS standards to all grade/ability levels. This seminar prepares candidates for successful completion of the appropriate TExES examination(s). ME 565A/ME 565B Professional Practicum (Fall/Spring Semester) is a professional practice seminar that spans the internship year for teachers of record and fourteen weeks for clinical teachers. Teachers of record are responsible for securing their internships. The purpose of the practicum is to ensure that program candidates are developing an expanding knowledge base and repertoire of skills related to instruction, local and state assessment, classroom environment, communication, and professional development. Internship experiences enable candidates to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions at an independent mastery level.

The curriculum is an online program which follows the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards and World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) standards for the creation of the online programs. When seeking assistance (technical or instructional), several methods are available to the candidates including phone and online assistance from instructor, phone and online assistance from field supervisors, and course online assistance from the Technology Director. Additionally, candidate's can view their grades online at any time.

**Based on the evidence presented above, Texas Institute for Teacher Education is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (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:

Texas Institute for Teacher Education provides 451 clock hours of training prior to the practicum. The course hours are unchanged as noted in the original application. The program's field-based experience requires 45 clock hours, with 15 clock hours by means of video, which is aligned to TAC§ 228.35 (a) (A). The field-based experience has specific objectives per observation and written feedback is required. Candidates submit responses to specific questions concerning their field-based observations. Logs are also signed by the classroom teacher being observed. This documentation was available for review. Additionally, the test preparation for Texas Institute for Teacher Education consists of 45 clock hours, which is well above the required six clock hours required in TAC§ 228.35 (a) (C).

Handbooks are provided to mentors and cooperating teachers. The mentor's handbook included: roles and responsibilities, program expectations for clinical teacher/interns and cooperating teacher/mentors, and methods of providing feedback to the teaching candidates. There are also handbooks for candidates, orientation, internship, field supervisors, and program evaluation. Electronic copies of the handbooks are available online, but the program supplies hard copies to mentors and cooperating teachers during the first meeting. Training for mentors is an abbreviated form of TxBESS. Texas Institute for Teacher Education is creating an online training program to make mentor and cooperating teacher training more accessible.

The program director, Dr. John Doak, is the only field supervisor at this time. Dr. Doak has been a special education teacher, principal, and educational diagnostician in the state of Texas. He has had certification in each of the fields. Additionally, Dr. Doak was an assistant professor in Special Education at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Nine (9) of thirteen (13) mentors and cooperating teachers responded to electronic TEA questionnaires. Four (4) of the nine (9) indicated that a lack of communication with the field supervisor was an issue. Again, four mentors stated that no observations of the candidate had occurred, but documentation in student files demonstrated that the candidates had indeed been observed. All ten (10) clinical teachers and interns who responded (10 of 44) felt the field supervisor was effective or very effective. After reviewing comments from mentors and cooperating teachers with program staff, strategies were suggested to build better rapport and communication with the mentors and cooperating teachers.

Since the field supervisor is a single person and created the modified TXBESS training for mentors, the field supervisor's training is to continue to update materials for mentors training and train new field supervisors as the program expands. Seven (7) of eight (8) teaching candidates who responded to electronic questionnaires from TEA indicated that field supervisors made contact within the first three weeks of internship or clinical teaching. The field supervisor's log indicated that all interns and clinical teachers had contact within the first three weeks as stated in TAC§ 228.35 (f). Observation forms contain a start and finish time of the observation (45 minutes or more in duration) and detailed comments, aligned to TAC§ 228.35

(f) (1). Five (5) of seven(7) candidates who responded to questionnaires indicated that the field supervisors had given them both verbal and written feedback from observations in accordance to TAC§ 228.35 (f). Copies of the candidates' observation forms were provided for the campus administrator as required by TAC§ 228.35 (f). This was verified by reviewed documentation and by responses on the principal's questionnaire. Interns are observed six times in the Texas Institute for Teacher Education program, with a summative conference in the spring. Clinical teachers are also observed six times by the field supervisor during the twelve week practicum, culminating with a summative conference. All of the observations are kept electronically and were reviewed by TEA staff during the site visit. Eighty-seven percent of the teaching candidates also indicated in the questionnaires that the field supervisor had provided them with additional coaching and other informal observations to assist with professional growth.

**Based on the evidence presented above, Texas Institute for Teacher Education is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (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:**

Benchmarks for candidates are clearly delineated for each course with an 80% mastery of training and coursework required. Assessments throughout coursework were comprised of graded assignments, quizzes, and performance-based assessments. If an assessment is not completed at a satisfactory level, remediation is required prior to allowing the candidate to test again. These assessments vary in content, but were the basic method of evaluating student progress. The coursework is offered sequentially and a candidate must pass each course before continuing to the next course. All coursework must be completed in order to begin the practicum [TAC 228.40(a)]. The success on coursework is the indicator that candidates are ready to take TExES.

Advisory committee minutes reveal annual evaluation of the curriculum and overall program effectiveness during the Data Analysis Review Event (DARE). A variety of data is reviewed including: demographics of candidates, ethnicity, age of candidates, test results, test domain results, candidates' evaluation of course work and curriculum, and candidates' formative and summative evaluations during observations. All of this information is provided to the advisory committee for feedback and input and was verified in the advisory committee minutes [TAC 228.40(c)].

A review of candidate files showed that required documents are retained for at least five years in a secure environment [TAC §228.40(d)].

**Based on the evidence presented above, Texas Institute for Teacher Education is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40 – ASSESSMENT**

## **AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.**

### **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 and initiate actions to correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A Compliance Status Report will be required in sixty days on compliance recommendations.

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

### **PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: A Compliance Status Report will be required in sixty days.**

There were no compliance issues found during this audit.

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

1. Consider including additional members to the advisory committee for a broader point of view and specific feedback from various perspectives: human resource personnel, superintendents, mentors, and graduates of the program.
2. Consider ways to improve relationships with mentors and cooperating teachers by demonstrating an appreciation for their roles, requesting their input about candidates' performance, and informing administrators of the quality of their help.
3. Create your ASEP finisher list as candidates enter the program, so tracking test scores is straightforward and finisher date review is uncomplicated.