



Compliance Audit Report 2011-2012 Education Service Center Region 7 Generalist 4-8

According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c), " An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter...shall be reviewed at least once every five years under procedures approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff; however, a review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the TEA staff." Per TAC §228.1(c), " All educator preparation programs are subject to the same standards of accountability, as required under Chapter 229 of this title." The Texas Education Agency administers Texas Administrative Code 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 for details.

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County/District Number: 092950

Approval Date: May, 2000

Program Specialists, Dr. Mary Black and Mr. Mixon Henry, conducted a Texas Education Agency (TEA) Compliance Audit of Education Service Center (ESC) Region 7's alternative initial teacher certification program on February 29 – March 2, 2012. The following are findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Data Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A self-report was submitted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) on February 1, 2012. An onsite review of documents, candidate records, course materials, and curriculum correlations charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition, TEA-created electronic questionnaires were sent to Education Service Center (ESC) Region 7's program stakeholders by TEA staff. Twelve (12) out of twelve (12) advisory committee members, twenty-four (24) out of forty-three (43) interns and clinical teachers, two (2) out of two (2) field supervisors, sixteen (16) out of forty (40) principals, and twenty-seven (27) out of forty-four (44) mentors and cooperating teachers responded. Qualitative methods of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence. Evidence of compliance was measured using a rubric correlated to TAC.

Opening and Closing Session:

The opening session on March 1, 2012, was attended by ten (10) people, including ESC Region 7 Executive Director Elizabeth Abernethy, Interim Director of Curriculum Sheron Darragh, and Program Coordinator Beth Nelms. The closing session on March 2, 2012, was attended by seven (7) people including Deputy Director Ronnie Hemann, Intern Director Sheron Darragh, and via phone, Program Coordinator Beth Nelms.

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

FINDINGS:

Program support was indicated by the governing body of ESC Region 7 per TAC §228.20(c) as evidenced by the participation of Beth Nelms in various aspects of the compliance audit.

The advisory committee consists of sixteen (16) members. Nine (9) members are from local school districts, three (3) members are from an education service center, two (2) members are from higher education, and two (2) members represent community/business interests. ESC Region 7 meets TAC §228.20(b) requirements for advisory committee composition.

The Advisory Committee meetings were reported as follows:

November 11, 2008 (19 present)

Topics discussed:

- Admissions criteria, 2.5 Grade Point Average (GPA), the district members want higher standards;
- Entry testing (THEA discussed and noted 5 years or older test results will require re-testing);
- Habermann interview;
- Order of curriculum for candidates; and
- Observations requirements.

February 11, 2009 (14 present)

Topics discussed:

- Use of Accuplacer for entry into program, reviewed required scores;
- Use of Pre Admission Content Test (PACT);
- Policies of transfers, into and out of program (members want it monitored closely);
- Field experience and easier pathway into districts needs to be created; and
- Late hires and the process of training them.

October 8, 2009 (15 present)

Topics discussed:

- Review Stetson evaluation of program, surveys of all groups (candidates, mentors, principals, HR directors, and staff); and
- Review candidate's handbook

May 9, 2010 (9 present)

Topics discussed:

- Principal surveys reviewed;
- Approval of clinical teaching; and
- Changes in certification fields Generalist EC-4 to Generalist EC-6 and Foreign Languages are now Languages Other Than English (LOTE), members would like to consider offering those fields.

October 16, 2010 (19 present)

Topics discussed:

- Stetson program evaluation;
- Update on number of candidates;
- Clinical teaching with the limited economics of districts; and
- Training calendar and used feedback to adjust calendar.

June 19, 2011 (10 present)

Topics discussed:

- Stetson evaluation surveys and reported no surveys will be sent to campus principals due to TEA surveys,
- Status of program as districts lose jobs,
- Continued support of ESC; and
- PACT implementation.

January 9, 2012 (5 present)

Topics discussed:

- Roles and responsibilities of the advisory committee (TEA PowerPoint);
- Reviewed candidates in each certification field, internship and clinical teaching;
- Curriculum checklist reviewed;
- Documentation of field experiences;
- New law requiring “hands on experience” as part of field experience;
- Training for field supervisors; and
- Stetson evaluation.

Agendas, minutes, and attendee records were available as evidence of advisory committee meetings. One hundred percent (100%) of the advisory committee members indicated in their responses to the TEA electronic survey that they did meet two times per academic year. The program meets the requirements for conducting a minimum of two advisory committee meetings per academic year as required by TAC §288.20(b).

Questionnaires from the advisory committee members also reported the following:

- Familiar with TAC §227, §228, and §229 = yes -100%
- Participate in designing or revising of the curriculum = yes - 89%, no – 11%
- Participate in major policies of EPP = yes - 100%

- Participate in overall evaluation of program = yes – 100%
- Review types of field experiences provided for candidates = yes - 100%

Based on the evidence presented, Education Service Center Region 7 is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.20 – GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS.

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

FINDINGS:

To be admitted to the ESC Region 7 teacher certification program , the candidate must have the following: a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher learning [TAC §227.10(C)]; a passing score on Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT), if allowed [TAC §227.10(c)]; 2.5 GPA or 2.5 in the last 60 hours [TAC §227.10(A)]; twelve (12) semester credit hours in a content field [TAC §227.10(C)]; demonstrate mastery of basic skills as reflected by the THEA, Accuplacer, or Texas Success Initiative (TSI) [TAC §227.10(4)]; exhibit adequate oral communication skills and submit an application [TAC §227.10(6)]; and participate in an interview or other screening device , in this case the Habermann “Star Teacher Interview” [TAC §227.10(6)]; and meet any other requirements the program determines which includes two writing samples in the application, consent to perform criminal background check, and three letters of references [TAC §227.10(7)].

Out-of-country applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate competence in the English language by submission of a minimum score on the computer-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). In addition, the applicant must have his/her transcripts from an out-of-country non-English speaking university evaluated by an approved TEA evaluation service [TAC §227.10(7)]. There were no out-of-country applicants at this time.

In a review of ten (10) candidates’ records, it was noted that two (2) candidates were admitted with a grade point average of less than 2.5. Their admittance did not exceed 10% of the cohort of candidates allowed by TAC §227.10(3)(b). Evidence was present that admission of these candidates was approved by the program director and program specialist. An essay is part of the admission requirements which is reviewed by the program director and specialist. In evaluating the candidates’ essays, the program felt that the essays demonstrated that the GPA was not reflective of their full academic ability or their potential to become a successful teacher.

The self-report submitted by ESC Region 7 stated that information about admission criteria and their program is available to the public through their website and by brochures [TAC §227.10(7)].

Based on the evidence presented, Education Service Center Region 7 is in compliance with TAC §227 – ADMISSION CRITERIA.

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

FINDINGS:

ESC Region 7 is approved to offer teacher certification in twenty-nine (29) fields. For the purpose of this compliance audit, the Generalist 4-8 was selected for in-depth review.

Qualifications necessary to be selected as a course instructor require a bachelor's or master's degree and a Texas teaching certificate. Instructors' credentials were presented for review and the criterion for selection was verified. It was determined that the instructors have the appropriate background and/or experience to provide instruction in this certification area.

In reviewing the Generalist 4-8 curriculum syllabi and alignment charts, it was found that the educator standards were the curricular basis for instruction as required by TAC §228.30(a). It was also noted that the curriculum addressed the relevant Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as required by TAC §228.30(a). The seventeen (17) subject matter topics were included in the coursework as prescribed by TAC §228.30(b). Six hours of test preparation were provided for candidates prior to TExES testing as per TAC §228.30(b)(17) and TAC §228.35(a)(3)(C).

Clinical teachers and interns were asked to respond to a series of questions prepared by TEA to verify aspects of the curriculum, its delivery, and its effectiveness. Clinical teachers and interns stated that ESC Region 7 was doing an excellent job in preparing them in the areas of learning theories, child and adolescent development, instructional methods for motivating students, developing lessons, using a variety of classroom assessments, using a variety of instructional strategies, and in teaching the Texas Code of Ethics. Students indicated more emphasis should be placed on the TEKS organization, structure, and skills, the teacher's responsibility for administering TAKS (STAAR), in using the TEKS in the content areas, in providing strategies for gifted and talented students, as well as students with limited English proficiency. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the clinical teachers and interns indicated that they would recommend the ESC Region 7 teacher education program to others.

Cooperating teachers responded through their questionnaire that the clinical teachers and interns were well prepared in understanding the Texas Educators Code of Ethics, child/adolescent development, the use of TEKS in the content areas, in understanding the TEKS organization, structure, and skills, and in the process of curriculum development. However, they also indicated that the clinical teachers and interns would benefit from more emphasis on applying reading strategies across the curriculum for all grade levels, administering the STAAR, and in using strategies for gifted/talented and limited English proficient students.

Principals reported that the students were well prepared in classroom management, in interpreting formal and informal assessments, and in the use of technology to support student learning. However, they also expressed that the students would benefit from more emphasis on working with students with limited English proficiency.

Based on evidence presented, Education Service Center Region 7 is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.30 – EDUCATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM.

**COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT - Texas
Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35 – PREPARATION PROGRAM COURSEWORK
AND/OR TRAINING**

FINDINGS:

Currently, ESC Region 7's initial teacher preparation program is delivered in a hybrid format with the majority of the instruction provided face-to-face. The total program consists of 418 clock hours for elementary certification and 346 clock hours for secondary certification and 336 clock hours for all-level certification. This includes the fifty (50) clock hours of documented district training noted in the candidate files. The clock hours meet the requirements set forth in TAC §228.35(a)(3). Evidence of appropriate clock hours was found in the self-report, program training record checklist, and in discussions with Beth Nelms.

Completion of 30 clock hours of field-based experience was verified by documentation in the candidates' folders and is completed prior to clinical teaching or internship as required by TAC §228.35 (d)(3)(A). In the past, fifteen (15) clock hours field-based experiences have been completed online using the Annenberg videos. However, the program now requires that all 30 clock hours of the field-based experiences to be completed in the school setting. Candidates must complete reflective journals and participate in observation activities to receive credit for the field based experience.

ESC Region 7 clinical teaching [TAC §228.35(d)(2)(A)] consists of thirteen (13) weeks and the internship is a full academic school year (180+ days). Evidence was presented in the form of clinical teacher and internship placement information which verified that clinical teaching and internship took place in an actual school setting rather than a distance learning lab or virtual school setting which is prohibited by TAC §228.35(d)(2)(C)(ii).

According to TAC §228.35(e), ESC Region 7 is responsible for providing cooperating teachers training that is scientifically – based and documents that training has been provided by a school district or education service center. ESC Region 7 requires a signed mentor agreement form at the end of the mentor and cooperating teacher training. This documentation was provided during the audit.

TAC §228.35(f) states that supervision of each candidate shall be conducted with the structured guidance and regular ongoing support of an experienced educator who has been trained as a field supervisor. All field supervisors have teaching certifications. Training for field supervisors was provided via webinar and PowerPoint which was emailed to the field supervisors. Confirmation of training was documented by email from field supervisors.

In a review of the candidates' files, initial contact was made by the field supervisor within the first three weeks of the candidates' assignment and was verified by the field supervisors' logs as required by TAC §228.35(f).

A total of three observations [TAC §228.35(f)(4)] must be conducted during clinical teaching and internship assignment and must be at least 45 minutes in duration [TAC §228.35(f)]. TAC §228.35(f) also states that the first observation must be conducted within the first six weeks of clinical teaching or internship. In review of the candidates' folders, evidence verified that the observations were conducted on the established schedule prescribed. In reviewing the

candidates' observation documentation, it was noted that the mentor or cooperating teacher observed the candidate six (6) times, three (3) observations were completed by the field supervisors, and the principal completed a mid-year assessment. The results of the observations are used to determine if the candidate's performance in the classroom and the skill sets needed for the issuance of a standard teaching certificate being sought was adequately met.

Furthermore, TAC §228.35(f) requires that the field supervisors document instructional practices observed and provide written feedback through an interactive conference with the candidates. Evidence was presented to support an interactive conference by signatures on the observation instruments.

It is also the responsibility of ESC Region 7 to provide a copy of the written feedback to the candidate's campus administrator as required by TAC §228.35(f). Evidence that the field supervisor had provided feedback to the campus administrator was verified by the campus administrator or his/her representative's signature on the observation form.

Additional informal observations and coaching were provided by the program as specified in TAC §228.35(f). Additional observation forms and emails were available as evidence of additional coaching for candidates.

Based on evidence presented, Education Service Center Region 7 is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.35 – PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ON-GOING SUPPORT.

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

FINDINGS:

ESC Region 7 has a candidate assessment and benchmarking process as prescribed by TAC §228.40(a). Evidence was presented to support an assessment and benchmarking process. The program uses a checklist which denotes each course and other program requirements. This checklist is signed off by program staff as a candidate successfully completes each item.

Readiness for testing [TAC §228.40(b)] is determined by attendance and successful completion of the test preparation session. According to TAC §228.40(b), the program shall not grant test approval for the pedagogy and professional responsibilities test until the candidate has met all the requirements for admission to the program and has been fully accepted into the educator preparation program.

Evaluation of the program's design and delivery of the curriculum should be continuous per TAC §228.40(c). Information such as performance data, scientifically-based research practices, and the results of internal and external assessments are included in the evaluation process. ESC Region 7 is a member of the Stetson and Associates Consortium. Stetson and Associates provides an extensive evaluation system which includes surveys gathered from candidates, mentors/cooperating teachers, principals, HR directors, and instructors. This information, along with testing data, is provided to the advisory committee for feedback and evaluation.

According to TAC §228.40(d), the program retains documents that evidence a candidate's eligibility for admission to the program and evidence of completion of all program requirements for a period of five years after program completion.

Based on evidence presented, Education Service Center Region 7 is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.40 – ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

COMPONENT VI: Professional Conduct (TAC) §228.50

TAC §228.50(a) states that during the period of candidate preparation, the educator preparation entity shall ensure that the individuals preparing candidates and the candidates themselves demonstrate adherence to Chapter 247 of this title (relating to Educators' Code of Ethics). At ESC Region 7 each student is required to sign an acknowledgment of reading and understanding the Texas code of ethics. A copy of the acknowledgment was found in the candidates' records. In addition, each faculty member is made aware of the code of ethics.

Texas Administrative Code §229

Current Accreditation Status

Education Service Center Region 7 is currently "Accredited".

Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

Pass Rate Performance:	2008-2009 Final 80% Standard	2009-2010 70% Standard	2010-2011 75% Pass Rate
Overall:	97%	97%	99%
Area: Generalist 4-8	100%	100%	100%

Program Recommendations:

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the compliance audit. If the program is NOT in compliance with any identified component, please consult the TAC rules and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A Compliance Status Report will be required every sixty days until the compliance issues are totally corrected.

Program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement and no follow up is required.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

No compliance recommendations at this time.

GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

Component I. Recommendations:

- Continue advisory committee training on an annual basis to prepare new members for their roles and responsibilities.

Component II. Recommendations

- Have candidates sign a FERPA letter stating that information on observations can be provided to the campus administrator.

Component III. Recommendations

- Update syllabi in areas of content standards, TEKS, 17 mandated TAC topics, and TExES domains and competencies as they apply to each course or module.