

**State P-16 Council Meeting
Wednesday, November 4, 2009
Minutes**

The twenty-fifth meeting of the State P-16 Council, authorized by statute, was held at the Travis State Office Building, Room 1-111, on November 4, 2009.

Statutory members present: Robert Scott (chair), Commissioner, Texas Education Agency (TEA); Raymund Paredes (co-chair), Commissioner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB); and Terrell Murphy, Commissioner, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative (DARS). Non statutory members present: Melody Johnson, Superintendent, Fort Worth ISD and Phyllis Snodgrass, President, San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce were also present.

Statutory members absent: Larry Temple, Executive Director, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Non-statutory member absent: Gregory Williams, President, Odessa College.

AGENDA ITEM ONE

Call to Order

Robert Scott called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM TWO

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Scott welcomed members and guests and provided remarks on a recent study released by the Institute for Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) on the attrition and dropout rates in Texas. He noted that although the state had experienced a decline in the attrition rate since 2000, more improvements are needed. He expressed the importance of state leaders, including the State P-16 Council, continuing to work together to come up with solutions to address dropout issues. Dr. Raymund Paredes shared news regarding a recent visit with Dr. Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. He left the meeting with the impression that the Department of Education was pleased with the direction Texas is taking in addressing academic success. Dr. Paredes noted that he and others in the higher education community are very encouraged by the collaborative work and progress being made in increasing graduation rates and college readiness. He applauded collaboration between TEA and THECB and said such efforts have laid the foundation for academic success. He also mentioned the use of data as being instrumental in allowing the state to work smarter and harder.

AGENDA ITEM THREE

Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Scott laid out the minutes from the September 30, 2009 Council meeting and asked for a motion to adopt. A motion was made and seconded. The minutes were unanimously adopted.

AGENDA ITEM FOUR

Agency and Council Member Updates

No additional member updates were provided.

AGENDA ITEM FIVE

Presentation on Educator Certification and Standards Initiatives

Dr. Karen Loonam, Deputy Associate Commissioner, Educator Certification and Standards, and Dr. Janice Lopez, Director of Educator Standards at the Texas Education Agency, presented information on teacher quality and teacher effectiveness. Dr. Loonam said that educator preparation programs had

increased from 68 to 177 state-approved programs since 1994 and much of the agency's focus had been placed on change to improve teacher effectiveness. She provided information on the route to certification, indicating that the number of initial standard certificates issues through alternative certification programs was 12,902 out of a total of 28,125 overall certificates issued in 2009. Dr. Loonam noted that surveys conducted in 2005 indicated a lack of consistency in training, field experience, and curriculum among programs. This feedback prompted the State Board for Educator Certification to begin the process of revising Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Rules to allow for improvements. Dr. Lopez then provided information on rule revisions relating to admissions to a program and preparation requirements.

Rule revisions relating to admission to programs (effective January 1, 2009) include:

- GPA 2.5 overall or 2.5 in the last 60 hours with a 10% exception
- Basic skills assessment
- Content knowledge - 12 semester hours, content certification exam or content exam from TEA approved vendor list

Rule revisions relating to preparation requirements (effective January 1, 2009) include:

- For initial certification - 300 total hours of training/coursework:
 - 30 hours field-based experience
 - 80 hours training/coursework prior to internship
 - 6 hours test prep
- For professional certification - 200 total hours of training/coursework related to standards for specific area
- Mentoring
- Program observations/field supervision

In addition to general rule revisions, Dr. Lopez provided detailed information on 17 new educator preparation curriculum requirements. She also talked about passage of Senate Bill 174 in 2009 which led SBEC to write new rules in TAC Chapter 229. Rules provided in Chapter 229 govern the accreditation of educator preparation programs. The rules ensure accountability, including sanctions, for the readiness for certification of candidates completing these programs.

Council member Johnson commended the agency on improvements made to standards and the emphasis on quality. She asked how student performance would be tied to educator quality. Dr. Loonam referred to a data system that is being developed to track individual students to teachers and programs. She mentioned that Louisiana was already using a similar system.

Dr. Johnson also asked how much emphasis would be placed on curriculum development. Dr. Lopez says they have been working with universities and alternative certification programs to determine how they are going to assess the learning of the candidates and how TEKS will be woven into the curriculum.

Dr. Johnson also asked about the value of the 4-8 certificate. She said she believed that by 6th grade, they should be content specific and content proficient. Dr. Loonam responded that they are hearing both sides of the argument. They were originally going to align curriculum with NCLB K-6 and 7-12, but decided to maintain the 4-8 certificate. They are now going to look at the impact of the EC-6 certificate, but suspect they may see a decrease in the 4-8 certificate because most of those teachers would be teaching 7th-8th grade in middle school.

Dr. Paredes asked whether SBEC had state data related to the variations on teacher effectiveness and teachers produced under the alternative certification programs as opposed to conventional university

programs. Dr. Loonam responded that national data is available (such as a Teach for America independent study) showing that after the first two years, there is no difference. She said that there were some connections between programs and effectiveness in the area of math, but she was not aware of any statewide data. Dr. Paredes noted that higher education could benefit from data that connected specific university-based teacher training programs to teacher effectiveness. Dr. Lopez indicated that the data they will be collecting under SB 174 requirements will allow them to gather information on effective and non-effective programs. Mr. Scott said that the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) was partnering with the agency in the development of the data system alluded to earlier and suggested that the Council invite representatives from MSDF to brief them on the status of development of the system at a future meeting. At the end of the discussion item, Dr. Paredes expressed his concern about the state minimum 2.5 GPA requirement for entry into teacher educator programs. He noted that other graduate programs have higher standards and he thought that any program responsible for teaching students throughout the state should also have higher standards. Dr. Loonam emphasized that the 2.5 GPA was a minimum standard allowed by the state, but many programs around the state did require a higher GPA for admission.

AGENDA ITEM SIX

Update on THECB Teacher Education Policy Development

Dr. Susan Barnes, Senior Director for Educator Standards at THECB provided a follow-up update on Teacher Educator Policy developments occurring at the agency. She told briefed Council members on initiatives they were planning to look at math and science degrees. They will be asking universities to voluntarily look at degree structure options. They are going to look at what teachers need to know in middle and high school. How degrees are structured now and where they will have flexibility with current law, current rule, if not where we go down the road. They have not established a start date yet, but the process will start within the next two months.

Dr. Barnes also mentioned a meeting being hosted by UT Arlington and UT Austin for ELA and social studies faculty at community colleges to examine college readiness standards and to support the teacher preparation/P-16 pipeline in those areas.

Following Dr. Barnes' update, council members engaged in a discussion regarding the need to have teachers degreed in the subject areas they teach in. Dr. Paredes specifically posed the following question: How much math do you really need to take in university program to be a good math teacher? He said he was trying to explore how we could expand the pool of educators without diluting effectiveness. Dr. Johnson expressed concerns about moving away from a real depth in learning in math and science when preparing to teach in those areas. She noted that math achievement gaps start in 3rd grade and stay the same until 9th grade. Mr. Scott suggested state resources be focused in elementary math.

Mr. Scott also mentioned passage of a proposition that amends the constitution to authorize the designation of a Tier I universities. He asked whether colleges of education were being considered for Tier 1 status. Dr. Paredes noted that one of the tragedies of higher education is the relationship between strong teacher preparation programs and having a prestigious academic reputation. The more prestigious the school is, the less interested it is in training teachers. He mentioned a recent conversation with a state university system chancellor regarding finding ways to attract the best undergraduates into teaching. He noted the importance of creating more incentives for producing high quality teachers.

AGENDA ITEM EIGHT

Panel Discussion on Exemplary Teacher Education Programs

Dr. Michael Marder, Associate Dean for Science and Mathematics Education and Co-Director of UTeach and Professor of Physics, UT Austin, provided an overview of the UTeach program. Hallmarks of the UTeach program include:

- **Collaboration** between Colleges of Sciences, Education, and Liberal Arts
- **Active recruitment** of science and mathematics majors to take the two initial one-hour UTeach courses free of charge
- Early and intensive **field experiences** throughout the program
- **Compact degree plans** that allow most students to graduate with a degree and certification in four years
- A focus on developing deep-level understanding of the **subject material** and incorporating effective approaches using technology in teaching
- Guidance and inspiration provided by faculty and highly experienced public school teachers who serve as **Master Teachers** in the program
- Courses taught by **faculty** who are actively engaged in research in mathematics and science and in the teaching and learning of mathematics and science
- Integrated **professional development courses** that all focus on teaching both mathematics and science, and are based on recent research in science and mathematics teaching and learning
- An array of **student benefits**, including paid internships that offer opportunities for community outreach in education
- All essential program elements on **permanent budget** or endowment.

Since its inception at the University of Texas, the UTeach program has been replicated at other Texas sites as well as at two sites in Tennessee.

Dr. Liz Stephens, Director of Educator Preparation, Texas State University in San Marcos presented information on the 21st Century Educator Preparation Program. Texas State originated as a normal school in 1898 and has become a public comprehensive university with 31,000 students. It is an emergent Hispanic-serving-institution that is comprised of the state's largest university-based educator preparation program. The College of Education currently has 5,000+ students. Dr. Stephens provided an overview of program changes made in the College of Education at Texas State University. She also described post graduate certifications required in Master's of Education Program, Teacher Recruitment Program, and Teacher Recruitment Program-Critical Shortage Areas Program. Overall changes made in the College of Education since 2007 included the following:

2007: College of Education strategic initiative: "Educators for the New Texas"

- state's changing demographics
- 21st century knowledge and skills

2008: State-level certification change: EC- 4 → EC- 6

- opportunity to systematically address English Language Learners (ELLs) in program redesign
- two options: EC-6 ESL Generalist and EC-6 Bilingual Generalist

2009: Faculty development and implementation of new EC-6 programs

- ESL Task Force-led Faculty Institute
- Faculty book study -- *Tongue-tied: The lives of multilingual children in public education*
- Faculty book study -- *Subtractive schooling: U.S. Mexican youth and the politics of caring*
- E3's ELL Regional Collaborative -- working with partner school districts, other community partners, and state education agency

Dr. Denise McDonald, Program Coordinator of Teacher Education, University of Houston-Clear Lake School of Education, described the school's teacher educator program that had been awarded the 2009 Christa McAuliffe Exemplary Teacher Education Program Award by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. The purpose of the award is to recognize excellence in teacher education programs and to advance the field of teacher education by identifying promising practices and critical issues related to measuring the impact of programs on learning. Collaborations between the School of Education and other university departments, two-semester internship program, and data collection use were credited for the program's success.

Panelists answered questions about their respective programs. Dr. Paredes then asked all three panelists about the participation of master teachers, principals and educators in the design of their programs. Panelists responded that a number of stakeholders, including teachers, curriculum coordinators, advisory boards, and students had been involved in the design of their programs.

At the end of the panel discussion, Mr. Scott told panelists how impressed he was with their work and invited them to provide feedback on a new e-learning portal that TEA was adopting.

AGENDA ITEM NINE

Adjournment

Mr. Scott announced the following dates for 2010 State P-16 Council meetings:

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

Wednesday, August 11, 2010

Wednesday, November 10, 2010

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.