



## Compliance Audit Report 2010-2011 Teacherbuilder.com

According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c) "An entity approved by the State Board for Educator Certification (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 TAC §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).

Contact Information: Dr. Noe Saucedo and Mr. Frank Saucedo

County/District Number: 108704

Texas Education Agency (TEA) Program Specialists, Sandra Jo Nix, Mixon Henry, and Vanessa Alba, in the Division of Educator Standards conducted a compliance audit on November 8 - 10, 2010 at 2524 W. Freddy Gonzalez, Edinburg, Texas 78539. The curricular focus of the compliance audit was the Generalist EC-6 program.

Date Self-Report Submitted: October 12, 2010

NOTE: During the opening session, the self-report was altered by Dr. Noe Saucedo and each item changed was initialed. Dr. Frank Saucedo then validated the self-report by signing the document.

It was also discovered during the self-report review that the report Teacherbuilder.com possessed did not match the report emailed to TEA. Frank Saucedo indicated that he emailed a revised copy to TEA; however, the lead program specialist, Sandra Nix, could not find evidence of receiving an email with a revised second copy. For the self-report review, the original report submitted to TEA was utilized.

### Original Proposal Submitted and Approved by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)

Teacherbuilder.com (TBC) was approved by to operate as a Texas educator preparation program on March 4, 2005. In their proposal, they requested to offer certification in Bilingual Generalist EC-4. The proposal stated that the program would:

- Combine a web-based teacher preparatory delivery model with a high-quality, research and field-based practicum;
- Provide high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive and classroom-focused;

- Assure that the program is customer-service oriented and willing to adjust to meet the needs of the program constituents;
- Provide 18 hours of web-based preparatory modules; and
- Ensure completion of pre-induction curricular modules by all candidates.

Other required components of the application referenced a TeacherBuilder.com PowerPoint. A copy of this PowerPoint is in the program's electronic cumulative file at TEA. In the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) Board agenda, it states that the candidates in the program may complete in 12 months.

### **Pre-Approval Site Visit – 2005**

A pre-approval site visit was conducted on February 10, 2005, in Edinburg, Texas. An approval of entity evaluation document was completed prior to the visit by Christopher Sanchez on February 7, 2005. This review was based on the proposal review. Evidence identified to check is as follows:

- concerns about responsibilities of stakeholders in program evaluation; check on plan for advisory board financial, planning, and time investment; development of website and chat rooms; actions that are going to be/have been taken by Board of Directors;
- insufficient information on delineation of admission criteria in regards to test scores and use of past course grades for admission; use of letters of recommendation, or other evidence of past performance in the field
- insufficient details on course objectives; insufficient benchmark information specific to courses/coursework; publishing benchmarks;
- insufficient details on course make-up;
- insufficient frequency of pre-service training;
- insufficient information such as names and credentials of personnel grading the modules;
- lack of timelines for evaluations;
- lack of specific procedures for evaluation;
- insufficient information about testing and certificate application procedure;
- insufficient evidence of clear indications of a support system.

In addition, there was note on a pre-visit planning worksheet referencing the need for a demonstration of online coursework/chat rooms/portfolios. There was no formal pre-approval report created for this visit. Only program specialist notes could be located.

## One Year Post Approval Visit - 2006

A one year post-approval visit was conducted on April 27, 2006. During the visit, it was discovered that:

- Collaboration with an advisory committee was not evident;
- Interviews revealed that candidates who were able to pass both the content and PPR exams were exempt from completing the instructional modules;
- Candidates were recommended for certification without instruction in classroom management, ethics, school law, pedagogy, or any other basic educator preparation areas;
- Interns did not have mentors for the entire internship. There was a disconnect between the field supervisors and the interns/mentors. A review of the process was recommended; and
- A student handbook was not available.

### Findings:

As a result of the one year post-approval visit, the TEA monitoring team required Teacherbuilder.com to develop an action plan to address the following areas.

- Establish an advisory committee;
- Follow state rules for language proficiency. Candidates MUST prove language proficiency before admission to the program;
- Ensure all modules are accessible and updated as needed. Continue to enhance the student support availability on the website;
- Discontinue the practice of recommending candidates for certification without the required preparation. Ensure that all candidates are given the complete program for which they have contracted and paid; and
- Develop and distribute guidelines for mentors to help ensure that interns receive the best possible assistance and also develop a plan for facilitating field supervisor communication through various levels.

## No Child Left Behind Compliance - June 28, 2006

On June 28, 2006, a letter was submitted to Dr. Karen Loonam, former Deputy Associate Commissioner, restating the proposal guidelines and requesting to be recognized as in compliance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) regulations. The program addressed compliance of the four standards by assuring:

### I. High Quality Professional Development consisting of:

- Sixty hours of web-based instructional modules which include:
  - TEKS, TAKS, and Instructional Planning;
  - Test Construction and Educational Measurement;
  - Effective Teaching Strategies and Enhancement of the Classroom Climate;
  - Multiple Intelligences and Special Student Populations;
  - Special Education and Inclusion;
  - Effective Classroom Management Strategies;
  - Technology in the Classroom;
  - Language Acquisition and Language Development;
  - Multiculturalism and the Diverse Learner;
  - Motivating Students; Effective Communication Skills;
  - Age Level Characteristics and Learning Styles;
  - Human Development Theory; PDAS and Teacher Effectiveness;
  - The Teacher, the Law and Code of Ethics; and
  - Test Taking Strategies, and any other topic deemed necessary.
- A minimum of 4 classroom observations by the field supervisor and mentor; two conducted by the field supervisor.
- Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS) training required for all mentor teachers and program field supervisors.

### II. Intensive Supervision/Mentor Training consisting of:

- Regularly scheduled meetings among interns, mentor teachers, and field supervisors during pre-service training and the internship;
- Visits by the Field Supervisors with the mentors and principals as evidenced by signatures of interns, mentors, and principals;
- Providing a copy of the intern observation to the principal;
- Activities that consisted of structured guidance and regular ongoing support. This would be in the form of self-evaluation videos made by the interns and submitted to field supervisors for review and feedback. The interns would also view their videos and conduct a self-evaluation to be submitted to the field supervisor. The videos

would be used to measure progress. One video should be done the first semester and one the second semester; and

- Completion of all pre-induction curricular modules by the intern.

### III. One-year Internship on Probationary Certificate consisting of:

- Supervision of all interns on probationary certificates by a mentor teacher and field supervisor while he/she is fulfilling the initial probationary period and any additional probationary years.

### IV. Demonstrated Satisfactory Progress: Benchmarks and Assessments consisting of:

- Benchmarks for formative evaluation for the curriculum would be gathered from the intern's performance on the TBC web-based curriculum;
- Benchmarks for admission/interview would consist of a transcript review, program admission documents, Gallup Teacher Insight, area of certification, a plan recommending curriculum sequence (as needed), and an E-Portfolio;
- Benchmarks for On-Line Curriculum: Module Tests (70%); Summative Score (80%), Chat Transcripts (review), and Barcode Issued;
- Benchmarks for the TExES: ASEP and E-Portfolio;
- Benchmarks for the Internship: Letter of Introduction, procurement of teaching position, probationary certificate, mentor evaluation, supervisor evaluation, self-evaluation;
- Benchmarks for PDAS: Formative (baseline), Summative (baseline), and Contract renewal; and
- Benchmarks for TBC: Standard Certificates.

## Oversight Visit – 2007

On June 14, 2007, an oversight team made a follow-up visit to Teacherbuilder.com and found that the administration and staff had addressed each recommendation outlined in the April 27, 2006 report. At that time, the program staff indicated that it had four categories for students: 1) applicants; 2) eligible candidates; 3) enrolled; and 4) intern. All interns must finish the program in order to be recommended for certification. A TxBESS training module was offered online. Frank Saucedo, owner, and Roman Gomez, two program staff members, are trainers of trainers for TxBESS and created the online training module. The action plan submitted indicated that the advisory would meet quarterly and the roles and responsibilities of the members were outlined. It was noted that Noe Saucedo, owner, conducted a Haberman interview via phone before admission into the program. He received training two years ago to use this instrument. It

was also noted during the visit that an information packet was provided to principals along with a visit by program staff and field supervisors.

On May 7, 2007, program staff received training in order to support the certification area of Teachers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Visually Impaired. Noe Saucedo, owner, indicated that two staff members have extensive experience with Schools of the Deaf and Blind as program supervisors, administrators and teachers. The names of the two staff members were not provided.

## **Baseline Data - 2009**

TEA gathered baseline data on each educator preparation program as required by an auditor's report in February, 2009. Dr. Noe Saucedo signed a document as being an accurate representation of Teacherbuilder.com. The information indicated that there were offices in Brownsville, Edinburg, Laredo, Houston, and Austin/San Antonio. It also indicated that interns and customers were serving on its advisory committee along with other advisory committee members required in TAC §227. He also indicated that the advisory committee participated in the design, delivery, evaluation and major policy decisions and that the board met a minimum of twice (October and May) each academic year. The information also indicated that completion of two math and two English courses with a 2.5 GPA or better was evidence of meeting basic skills requirements. The staff indicated that policies were in place to admit a candidate for career and technology education certification and to admit a candidate from out-of-country. It also indicated that beginning with the 2009-10 school year, the program would require a minimum of 30 clock hours of field-based experience prior to assignment as an intern. Fifteen hours of video experiences would be used as part of the 30 clock hours. Furthermore, it was indicated that all internship contact was face-to-face. The program curriculum was evaluated by student/candidate intern feedback. Effective with the 2009-10 year, all records would be kept in both paper and electronic formats. The program indicated that it trained the mentors on their roles and responsibilities. The mentor was paid \$200 per semester or as required by the district. The baseline data indicated that upon request, Teacherbuilder.com would direct the intern to share their formal observations with their administrator.

## **Desk Audit Summer 2009**

During the summer of 2009, a desk audit was conducted by the Division of Educator Standards staff at TEA. Teacherbuilder.com was found to be out of compliance in three (3) out of five (5) component areas. The areas of non-compliance were TAC §228.30 Curriculum, TAC §228.35 Program Delivery and On-Going Support, and TAC § 228.40 Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

### **Findings:**

As a result of the desk audit, the following findings were reported:

- Student folders should contain all materials required for admission: interview record, written assessment, passing score on the screening instrument, screening instrument, and letter of recommendation. Full documentation should be placed in student folders.
- No documentation of any field experiences was found in the student folders.
- The program stated that it accepted up to 50 hours of school district training, however, no documentation could be found in the student folders.
- Observation forms were missing and some contained only school district PDAS instruments.
- There was no program orientation program to instruct the candidates how to navigate the online program.
- Teacherbuilder.com did not meet the required clock hours. Additional clock hours should be created.
- The curriculum was an online textbook, strictly narrative with no charts, graphs, or other explanatory material.
- Assessments were inadequate consisting only of assessments for each domain and a final examination of 80 questions. Unlimited attempts were allowed with the option of reviewing correct answers prior to the next attempt.
- There were no projects, written response/reflections, lesson plan assignments or modeling of effective classroom management or instruction.
- Adequate coverage of the 17 topics could not be substantiated.
- There was no documentation of evaluation instruments or other evaluative material.

## Technical Visit 2010

### Methods of Data Gathering and Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with Texas Administrative Code governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means during the November 8-11, 2010 compliance audit. A review of documents, candidate folders, program hours, curriculum review of the online coursework, curriculum correlation charts, and various data gathered from TEA official records, and Educational Testing Service (ETS) provided evidence regarding compliance. A self-report was submitted to TEA by Teacherbuilder.com on October 12, 2010. Interviews were held with Teacherbuilder.com staff to confirm and clarify items submitted in the self-report on the first day of the compliance audit. In addition, electronic questionnaires were

sent to Teacherbuilder.com stakeholders and candidates by TEA. A total of twenty-five (25) respondents started the questionnaire sent by TEA, but only 18 were completed: twelve (12) out of eighteen (18) interns, two (2) out of three (3) field supervisors, two (2) out of two (2) school principals, no campus mentors, and two (2) out of two (2) advisory committee members.

The opening session held on November 9, 2010, was attended initially by four (4) program staff members, including Dr. Noe Saucedo and Frank Saucedo, Co-Directors, Saul Rodriguez, web-developer hired by the program, and Jessica Muniz, Program Coordinator. After lunch Stephanie McCary, an advisory committee member, participated in discussions. The advisory committee training PowerPoint was emailed to Frank Saucedo to be used in the upcoming advisory committee meeting.

During the opening session, Dr. Noe Saucedo and Frank Saucedo explained their backgrounds and the philosophy upon which the Teacherbuilder.com program was built. Saul Rodriguez presented a brief PowerPoint which focused on the design of the new website.

Three people attended the closing session on November 11, 2010. Dr. Noe Saucedo, Frank Saucedo, and Jessica Muniz were present.

## **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 Teacherbuilder.com per TAC §228.20(c) by Dr. Noe Saucedo and Frank Saucedo's participation in various aspects of the compliance audit.

The Teacherbuilder.com Advisory Committee consisted of fifteen (15) members: five (5) members from school district, one (1) member from higher education, one (1) member from an education service center, and three (3) members from business and community. The seven (7) staff members of Teacherbuilder.com comprised the remaining members of the advisory committee. The advisory committee member representing higher education contacted TEA and indicated that he did not serve on the advisory committee. Three advisory committee members responded to the questionnaire distributed by TEA indicating that they had served on the committee for six to 12 months. The other responding member indicated that he/she had served on the committee for more than five years.

Two meetings for the 2010-2011 academic year were listed in the self-report as November 2, 2010, and April 5, 2011. However, in reviewing the self-report with the Teacherbuilder.com staff, they indicated that they had not had any advisory committee meetings this year and were waiting until after the audit to have the first meeting for the 2010-2011 academic year. It was discovered that the dates listed above were incorrectly reported and should have been November 2, 2009, and April 5, 2010. The meetings scheduled for the 2010-11 academic year are December 7, 2010, and March 16, 2011. The advisory committee members confirmed in

their questionnaire that two meetings were held each academic year. One hundred percent (100%) of the responding advisory committee members indicated that they signed attendance records, received an agenda, and received copies of minutes of the previous meeting. Agendas, minutes, and attendance records for the 2009-2010 academic year advisory meetings were present for inspection in the document review as evidence of compliance. Sufficient evidence exists that the advisory committee's membership and meeting schedule meet the requirements specified in TAC §228.20(b).

Two of the three members (1 skipped these questions) indicated in their questionnaire that they participated in curriculum design, policy decisions, and program evaluation as per TAC §228.20(b). While no record could be located for discussion of field-based experiences in the advisory committee minutes or listed as an agenda item as required by TAC §228.20(d), two of the three committee members (one skipped this question) responding to the advisory committee questionnaire indicated that field experiences were discussed.

In the advisory committee questionnaire, the members were asked to identify the strengths of the Teacherbuilder.com teacher preparation program. The committee members indicated that the strengths included the flexibility of the online program. No areas were cited by the advisory committee as needing improvement.

**Based on evidence presented, Teacherbuilder.com is in compliance with COMPONENT I: COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20 – GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS.**

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

### **Findings:**

Admission requirements for the Teacherbuilder.com initial certification program were described in the self-report, on their website, and in a public relations flier presented for review. According to these sources, in order to be admitted into the Teacherbuilder.com teacher education program, the candidate must have completed a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning [TAC §227.10(c)], have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or a 2.5 in the last sixty hours and a 2.5 in the candidate's content area [TAC 227.10(a)]. The candidate must also demonstrate competency in reading, writing, and math as determined by a transcript review and have a "B" or better in English composition, literature, math, or a combination approved by the program. The applicant must pass the THEA/TASP with a score of 230 in reading, 220 in math, and 230 in writing in order to verify basic skill competence. If SAT is used for admittance, a verbal score of 500 and a math score of 450 is required. If the ACT is used, a score of 23 in reading and writing and a score of 21 in math is required [TAC §227.10(4)]. According to the website, bilingual candidates may be required to take an oral proficiency test. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a computer assisted score of 213 or a paper administered test score of 550 is required [TAC §227.10(5)]. The program also indicated that the Test of Spoken English (TSE) with a score of 50 would be acceptable. (This test was

discontinued on March 31, 2010. However, the scores of candidates taking this test prior to the discontinued date are valid for two years). Lastly, the website indicated that all participants will undergo the Haberman Interview and will complete a Gallup Teacher Insight® assessment. The applicants are asked to complete an online electronic application. A step-by-step process was available for applicants to follow in order to complete the admission process [TAC §227.10(6)].

In reviewing fifty-eight (58) candidate folders, evidence of compliance with the admission requirements was inconsistent. A large number of candidate files who had been identified for review could not be located. One program specialist searched for twenty individual files and only located nine.

The application for admission was completed online and maintained electronically. Periodically, portions of the application were found in candidate's files. However a printout of the entire application was not available in the document review and could not be accessed online for review electronically [TAC §227.10(6)].

Transcripts had been faxed or had been printed from the college registrar's site were found in candidate files. Other transcripts were found that were official but with "issued to student" stamped on them. Transcripts had notes on them reflecting the calculation of candidates' hours [TAC §227.10(C)]. All candidates' records reflected a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher learning recognized by regional accrediting agency [TAC §227.10(c)]. Evidence of grade point compliance was found with some exceptions falling within the 10% cohort rule [TAC §227.10(A)]. One candidate was admitted with a 1.878 grade point average. No evidence was present in the candidate's files of the Co-Director's approval to admit candidates within the 10% cohort rule [TAC §227.10(3)(b)]. Evidence of test data reflecting basic skills competency was not found in all candidates' folders or on candidates' transcripts [TAC §227.10(4)].

There was evidence that transcripts from out-of-country candidates had been reviewed by credentialing services. However, there was no evidence of TOEFL scores for these candidates included in their records [TAC §227.10(4)]. A *Foreign Educator Eligibility Review* checklist was presented by Teacherbuilder.com staff in the document review requiring check off of the following: 6 or more hours of English in transcripts, successful interview with Teacherbuilder.com staff, TOEFL score requirements, and successful completion of approved English as a second language (ESL) course. For Written English Proficiency the check off item was "Has the student passed a content TExES exam?" The check off item for Oral Language Proficiency was "Has student successfully completed a job interview?"

In addition, no evidence was present in the candidates' files or presented by the program staff that the Haberman interview or any interviews were conducted [TAC §227.10(6)]. Dr. Saucedo indicated that he conducted the Haberman interview over the phone, and because of the Haberman's requirement for confidentiality of the questions, he would not be able to place the results of the interview, the scoring rubric, or the response record in the candidates' folders. It was indicated by Dr. Saucedo that the Gallup Teacher Insight was no longer used by the program. Therefore, because of a lack of sufficient evidence, it must be concluded that no interview is conducted as an admission requirement. Pre-admission content testing (PACT) is currently not required for admission by the program. In the TEA review of records provided by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), five candidates affiliated with Teacherbuilder.com have tested with PACT. However, no evidence of the PACT scores was found in the candidates'

folders [TAC §227.10(C)]. In summary, the admission requirements listed on the website and other recruiting material do not match the current admission requirements of the program.

In the annual performance report, Teacherbuilder.com staff reported that it admitted eight hundred sixty-six (866) candidates. Two hundred eighty-four (284) candidates completed the program during the last academic year. During the compliance audit, the Teacherbuilder.com staff reported that the program currently has a total of three hundred seventy-seven (377) candidates enrolled with one hundred eight (108) of those being interns.

The self-report indicated that over twenty (20) students were admitted that required verification of the ability to speak and understand the English language [TAC §227.10(e)]. In clarification of the self-report, Teacherbuilder.com staff also indicated that they admitted six (6) to ten (10) candidates under the 10% cohort rule. In the self-report, it was reported that eleven (11) or more “late hire” interns [TAC §227.10(7)(d)] were in their program. However, in discussions with the program staff, they indicated that ninety-nine percent (99%) of their interns were “late hires”. The program staff did not respond to the question about the number of students in Career and Technology Education [TAC §227.10(3)(b)] in the self-report but they did indicate that career and technology education candidates were required to present a statement of qualifications in order to meet TAC §230 and TAC §233. In response to a request by the TEA program specialists, it was reported by a Teacherbuilder.com staff member that there were twenty-three (23) career and technology education candidates currently enrolled. While some evidence of the statement of qualifications was noted in a few candidates’ files, TEA program specialists requested a list of all candidates in the above mentioned category (career and technology education) so that evidence of compliance with TAC could be substantiated through a candidate file review. The list was not produced by the program and compliance with TAC could not be verified.

The self-report indicated that the program has between eleven (11) to twenty (20) candidates who are participating in the Teacher Aide Exemption program. TEA program specialists pointed out to the Teacherbuilder.com staff that they were not eligible to have candidates in this program. Dr. Saucedo indicated that this item had been marked on the self-report by mistake and he corrected it before he signed it.

An incident pertaining to candidate documentation occurred prior to the compliance audit. A former teacherbuilder.com intern forwarded an email sent by Teacherbuilder.com to the TEA Director of Educator Standards. The Teacherbuilder.com email informed the former interns that their candidate files were incomplete because they did not contain official transcripts. The email stated that if an official transcript was not received by a specified date TEA would revoke their standard teaching certificates. The Director of Educator Standards and program specialist Sandra Nix placed a telephone call to Mr. Frank Saucedo and demanded that retraction email be sent instructing the recipients to disregard the Teacherbuilder.com request for official transcripts and retract the statement that the teachers’ standard teaching certificates were in danger of being revoked by TEA. Teacherbuilder.com sent a retraction email.

The program staff indicated in the self-report that information about their program could be found on the Teacherbuilder.com website, in catalogs, and brochures. The self-report also indicated that they attended career fairs and made school and community college visits. Media

outlets such as radio, television, newspaper, and billboards were also utilized per the program. The only evidence available for review was the website and one brochure.

A member of the TEA staff provided instruction in proper student information collection, organization, and storage to a staff member of Teacherbuilder.com during the compliance audit.

**Based on the evidence presented, Teacherbuilder.com is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §227.10-Admission Requirements.**

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

#### **Findings:**

Dr. Noe Saucedo was the only instructor listed for the online modules. In review of his vita, Dr. Saucedo is certified in Math and Biology. Since the program does not mandate the PACT as an admission requirement, Teacherbuilder.com was informed that they are required to provide qualified instructors for each certification area that they are approved to offer or for which they have students pursuing certification. The instructor is expected to provide content methodology and support for those pursuing specific certification areas. No instructors were identified by the program who were certified as a Generalist EC-4, Generalist 4-8, Generalist EC-6 or certified in language arts, social studies, music, art, physical education, or health, or trade and industrial education.

On the Teacherbuilder.com website, a curriculum summary was provided. "The curriculum program will focus on integrating the TExES standards in the area and level for which certification is sought. Interns will participate in a minimum of 90 hours of web-based instructional modules focusing on the development of the participant's knowledge and skills necessary for the completion of the program. The hands-on experience will further assist the interns to prepare them (sic) for successful completion of the certification examinations."

Teacherbuilder.com provided TEA program specialists with access to their online program in order to evaluate the online format and curriculum content. Sufficient coverage and alignment of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) could not be verified through the self-report, student teacher responses, the alignment chart required by TEA, or through a review of the online curriculum. On the alignment chart for the PPR under the TEKS section, Teacherbuilder.com indicated that the TEKS were covered in the Module: Bilingual Supplement and Content Specific Reading. This module could not be located in the online program. The program staff indicated that the Bilingual curriculum was delivered in a face-to-face format. Teacherbuilder.com indicated that it has a cooperative agreement with Bilingual Educators in Houston, Texas, to deliver bilingual training. The TEA program specialists requested the bilingual curriculum for review. Teacherbuilder.com agreed to provide it. At one point, when reminded about the request for the bilingual curriculum, Frank Saucedo responded that it was printing. However, no bilingual coursework was presented for review during the compliance audit. Numerous other attempts were made to secure the bilingual material. A request was sent

to Lillian Hernandez with Bilingual Educators who works with Teacherbuilder.com in providing bilingual instruction and supervision. Ms. Hernandez replied that she did not have the curriculum and it would have to be secured from Frank Saucedo. Since the material was not provided, the TEA staff was unable to review or verify that it addressed the appropriate educator standards, TEKS or 17 mandated curriculum topics.

Further review by TEA staff indicated insufficient coverage and alignment of the 17 curriculum topics [TAC §228.30]. Coverage could not be verified through the self-report, intern responses, or the curriculum alignment chart required by TEA or through a review of the online curriculum. In reviewing the online curriculum, the 17 curriculum topics were fragmented and were mentioned in various modules, but nowhere were they covered in a depth that would provide the candidate with adequate knowledge to pass the PPR test. Examples of the lack of depth of curriculum can be found in the following modules: Assessment consisted of five (5) sentences; Competency 1–Understanding Growth and Development consisted of nine (9) sentences; TEKS explanation consisted of eighteen (18) sentences; Learning styles consisted of twenty-two (22) sentences; Lesson planning consisted of thirty-three (33) sentences; How learning occurs consisted of thirteen (13) sentences. Many more examples of superficial coverage of the topics are available in the printed curriculum documentation. Information about reading instruction, which is required in all certification areas, could not be located in any of the online materials.

The Code of Ethics was listed in Domain IV Section 13.4. It was difficult to locate the actual Code of Ethics because it was embedded in a module along with communicating through family involvement and interacting with other members of the educational community. There was no explanation of the code itself or examples of misconduct or consequences. There was no way to check the candidate’s understanding of the content, the candidate was only asked to read the code.

Child Development was listed in Domain I Competencies 1.4, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14 with articles about Piaget, Kohlberg, Maslow, and Erikson. Candidates were provided links to the Wikipedia for more information about each person. There were no projects or activities associated with this activity. In Domain I, Section 2.4, in discussing the Hawthorne Effect, the following reference was made: “Those students who were identified as being extremely intelligent made significant gains in academic achievement and were performing at the top on national achievement tests. The students where were identified as being slow and even mentally retarded made no gains at all.” This is an example of the content not being updated to reflect the current appropriate and acceptable terminology. The notation at the bottom of the screen indicates that this section was last updated on Thursday, February 9, 2006. In discussions with Frank Saucedo on this issue, he stated that he could see how candidates would have difficulty understanding and knowing how to appropriately apply the information in a classroom setting. He further stated that there was much work to be done and that he did not understand the specifics of the required curriculum.

Student confusion with the online program can be summed up by comments on the student forum. Students were asking each other what to do after they had finished reading and could they take the test again if they did not pass it the first time.

Curriculum that included theories regarding motivation, learning, TEKS organization and skills, content TEKS, teacher responsibilities for TAKS, parent conferencing and communication skills, instructional technology, instructional strategies, and differentiated instruction were difficult to locate and were not sufficient in preparing a beginning teacher to be successful in the classroom.

Domain II: Competency 5 and 6 discuss “Environment of Hope” and “Managing Student Behavior” respectively. A glossary provided in Domain II lists vocabulary not related to the domain. There were no major projects or activities to reinforce the content.

After taking the assessment for Domain II, a candidate wrote the following to

Teacherbuilder.com: “Seems to me there are several questions unfair in this test. For example, test assumes that student know what a paraprofessional does. (sic) it was never covered in the course... Answer to question no. 5 goes against everything taught in the course... The answer to question no. 8 assumes that the student knows what a Behavioral Log Spreadsheet is. Does this chart really exist? I don’t know! Again, this was never covered in the course.”

Special populations were covered in Domain IV Competency 13.2. This area focused on defining Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, and Attention Deficit Disorders. A TEA staff member conferred with Frank Saucedo in an attempt to align the online modules with the 17 mandated curriculum topics. After some review, Frank Saucedo indicated that the content needed to be more in line with TAC requirements and was difficult to follow, particularly when following identified links to other Internet sites. The PPR curriculum was last reviewed by TEA staff during a desk audit in the summer of 2009. At that time numerous recommendations were made to remedy the deficiencies noted in the curriculum area. However, no evidence exists that the online modules have been changed or updated because of the previous evaluation.

In reviewing the format of the online program, it was discovered that objectives for each section were not provided. The coursework is best described as an online textbook with links to Wikipedia topics. There are no assignments, interactive activities, projects, written responses/reflections, or lesson plan requirements which a candidate must complete in order to show mastery of the module content and/or skills. There were no charts, graphs, diagrams, videos, or pictures used to expand or clarify the topics. The only type of interaction present in the online program was chat and discussion. However, when the interaction components were opened, there was nothing to view. When asked in the self-report to select the types of modules assessments used in the online coursework, Teacherbuilder.com staff indicated that it used quizzes/tests with a mastery level determined. This was verified in the online coursework and curriculum summary found on their website. There was an assessment at the end of each domain consisting of five (5) multiple-choice questions and a final examination. However, they further responded that they used open ended essay questions with grading rubrics, student-written reports graded with a rubric, portfolios graded with rubrics, and reactions to case studies/hypothetical classroom situations graded with rubrics. None of these could be located as part of the course requirements. There was mention of an e-portfolio in the module descriptions submitted to TEA in the Generalist EC-6 matrix which stated that the e-portfolio would be maintained by interns and would be emailed to program supervisors at periodic intervals during the internship and upon completion of the internship. The contents would include communications between the program supervisor and intern, sample lesson plans, a sample grade book and other artifacts/records deemed appropriate by program supervisors and staff.

When asked to see a sample of an intern e-portfolio, Dr. Saucedo indicated that the program no longer used the portfolios but perhaps its use should be revisited. There was no mention or evidence presented of using videos as a means of evaluation or self-reflection as outlined in an earlier plan presented to the TEA.

In May 2010, Teacherbuilder.com staff submitted a matrix requesting approval to offer the Generalist EC-6, Generalist EC-6 Bilingual Spanish, and Generalist EC-6 ESL certificates to replace its Generalist EC-4 certificate. In the application, the program was asked to provide assurances that all appropriate educator standards would be addressed in the content and properly assessed. In reviewing the curriculum alignment chart submitted by Teacherbuilder.com staff for completion prior to the visit, the chart revealed that the educator standards for English Language Arts/Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education, Music, and Art were covered in the internship and in a course entitled "Content Specific Reading". The module entitled "Content Specific Reading" was not available for review. It was listed as a course to be developed submitted by Teacherbuilder.com staff. There was no coursework available in their online program that addressed the educator standards, domains, or competencies of the Generalist EC-6 certificate.

One intern that was on the original questionnaire email list provided by Teacherbuilder.com started the questionnaire but stopped responding after a few questions. This was the sole response from the initial email request. In an effort to gather data pertaining to the Teacherbuilder.com program, TEA requested the email addresses of all first, second, and third year probationary candidates. The program did not supply the email lists to TEA. During the data collection process, Teacherbuilder.com emailed a communication to former candidates who are now certified teachers stating that their folders were incomplete and the teacher needed to secure an official transcript and send it to Teacherbuilder.com by a specific date or their teaching certificate would be revoked by TEA. This email was forwarded by one concerned recipient to the Director of Educator Standards at the Texas Education Agency. The Teacherbuilder.com staff was confronted by the Director of Educator Standards about the inappropriateness of the email and the threat that it contained. They were directed to send a retraction email directing recipients to disregard the request and indicate that their teaching certificates were not in danger of being revoked.

In order to gain more information on the Teacherbuilder.com program, TEA staff used the addresses of the Teacherbuilder.com email to send a student teacher/clinical teacher/ intern questionnaire. Seventeen people on that email list responded to the questionnaire request. In reviewing the student teacher/clinical teacher/intern questionnaire responses, in answer to how effective the courses were in preparing the candidate for the teaching experience, the following areas were identified as areas of need: forty-three point eight (43.8%) reading strategies across the curriculum for all grade levels; forty-three point eight (43.8%) Texas Essential Knowledge and skills (TEKS) Organization, Structure, and Skills; fifty percent (50%) utilizing TEKS in the content areas; fifty percent (50%) process of curriculum development; forty-three point eight percent (43.8%) use of formative assessments to diagnose student learning needs; fifty percent (50%) laws and standards regarding students with special education needs; fifty-six point three percent (56.3%) standards and teaching strategies for students designated as gifted and talented.

No mentor teachers responded to the TEA questionnaire, so evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum or candidate preparation from their perspective was not available. However, from the principal questionnaire, special populations were identified as an area of concern. In addition, when asked to rate the preparation level of the Teacherbuilder.com candidates, fifty percent (50%) of the principals responding reported that the program prepared its candidates in most areas with a few areas to work on. The other fifty percent (50%) of the principals responding felt that the candidates were prepared in few areas with many areas to work on.

**Based on evidence presented, Teacherbuilder.com is not 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:**

Teacherbuilder.com staff indicated in their self-report that they are currently offering certification in sixty (60) different certification areas. The original proposal submitted to TEA indicated that Teacherbuilder.com would provide preparatory modules for the following: Bilingual Generalist (EC-4); Bilingual Generalist (4-8); Generalist (4-8); and English as a Second Language Supplemental.” Since Teacherbuilder.com is not requiring Pre-Admission Content Testing (PACT) as a requirement for admission, qualified instructors are required to support each of the certification fields. If Teacherbuilder.com is unable to supply qualified content instructors for all active certification areas, certification areas should be reviewed and possibly discontinued. Certification areas may be removed by sending an official letter to the TEA, Division of Education Certification and Standards.

The curriculum is delivered totally online with the bilingual supplement being delivered, per a discussion with the program staff, in a face-to-face format. The online curriculum is divided into four domains. Domain 1 reportedly consists of thirty-five (35) hours; domain 2 consists of ten (10) hours; domain three (3) consists of thirty (30) hours; and domain 4 consists of fifteen (15) hours. The total number of hours reported by Teacherbuilder.com in the self-report and Program Hours Chart was three hundred (300) clock hours. However, in analysis, three hundred (300) clock hours of coursework could not be validated.

The program reported thirty (30) hours of field based observation on the TEA Hours Chart, but Teacherbuilder.com’s self-report (Question #51) indicated that it required less than thirty (30) hours of field observations. Three candidates indicated in written comments on their questionnaire that they had completed “none,” “none by my ACP or Bilingual Educators,” and that “all I had to do was modules online.” No observation records were found in the student folders so the thirty (30) hours of field based observation requirements could not be verified as required by TAC §228.35(f). The self-report (Question # 52-53) also indicated that fifteen (15) hours of video were used as part of the field-based observations. The videos used are the TXBess mentor training videos. However, fifty percent (50%) of the respondents to the intern questionnaire stated that did not view any videos and fourteen point three percent (14.3%) indicated that they viewed videos for two (2) hours or less, and finally fourteen point three

percent (14.3%) indicated that they did not know if they viewed videos. The self-report (Question # 54) continued that the candidates documented their field-based experiences utilizing time logs, focused observation activities, reflection journals, classroom discussions, response to online questions, and classroom activities. Fifty four point five percent (54.5%) indicated that they just did general observations. There was no consistent evidence of time logs or other records in the candidates' folders or presented in the document review of the required thirty hours of field observation required per TAC 228.35(A).

The coursework reported necessary prior to internship was ninety (90) hours. This would involve completion of the online program. This would meet the minimum one hundred-ten (110) clock hours needed prior to internship. However, in discussion during the audit about "late hires", Dr. Saucedo indicated that ninety-nine percent (99%) of their interns were late hires. Therefore, "late hires" would have ninety (90) days to complete both the field observations and initial coursework. This essentially means that the Teacherbuilder.com candidates were entering their internship and a classroom on the first day with no preparation. Furthermore, there was no documentation located in the candidates' files or elsewhere to verify that the "late hire" requirements were met within the required time frame [TAC §228.35(c)].

Teacherbuilder.com indicated that it provided one hundred twenty (120) hours of coursework in addition to the online coursework. Frank Saucedo indicated that the bilingual curriculum was being printed out for TEA's review during the visit. No additional coursework other than what was online was produced for review.

The program reported that ten (10) clock hours of test preparation was provided online in the form of definitions flashcards [TAC §228.30]. In the self-report (Question #57), the program reported that they accepted up to fifty (50) hours of professional training from school districts toward the total number of required program hours. The self-report (Questions #58) indicated that a Continuing Professional Education (CPE) certificate or some type of school district record was required as verification in order to count the hours. Again, no documentation was located in the candidates' files or elsewhere during the document review to verify this claim. [TAC §228.35(a)(5)]. TEA requested the names of the candidates who were using this means for program credit in order to verify that the appropriate records were in the candidates' files. However, these names were not furnished, and in the general review of the candidate files, no documentation was located to substantiate this claim.

No systematic method was presented by Teacherbuilder.com staff to track the completion of various requirements required by Texas Administrative Code.

In reviewing the online format, program specialists noted that it was confusing and unorganized. Each lesson was built around testing domains and competencies that acted as an index or table of contents for the lessons. The lessons consisted of reading a screen of text which was not augmented with pictures, charts, diagrams, or videos. After the domain was completed, the candidate was required to answer a multiple choice quiz usually consisting of five questions. Often the candidates were referred to other links such as Wikipedia or professional organizations for additional supplemental information. However, the candidates were sent to these links without a purpose or without instructions for what to do or look for once they were at the sites. Among other notable format issues were that the content did not display copyright permission or sources of the content; the courses were not ADA compliant; an orientation module for students on how to navigate through the coursework did not exist; no evidence of

instructor feedback existed; and various means of communication from instructor to candidate such as computer conferencing, email, faxes, chats, webinars, and standard mail were not utilized. Also, there was no modeling by an experienced instructor available in any form. In addition, there were no opportunities to practice teaching in a safe, constructive environment. No interactive activities, projects, or assignments were required to ensure the candidates' grasp of the concepts and skills being presented. There were numerous other format issues. For example, in many places a small square substituted for an apostrophe. In Domain 2.2, in the text on multiculturalism in Texas for the candidates, the statistics were left blank and only lines existed where the statistics should have been inserted. In addition, some of the text would be broken up by extra inserted lines giving the illusion that it was a new paragraph when in effect it was the continuation of the sentence.

In discussions with the Teacherbuilder.com directors and other staff about formatting issues, the program indicated that they did not use specific standards in the development of online coursework. They indicated that the program was developed five years ago, and at the time, there were very few guidelines to follow, so they developed the courses to the best of their ability. They also indicated that since their online courses were now five years old, they were ready for revision. The programmer, Saul Rodriguez, presented during the opening session frames in a PowerPoint of how their revised website would appear.

The program requires an internship of one hundred eighty (180) days or one academic year. Recently, TeacherBuilder.com applied for and was approved to allow a minimum of 12 weeks of clinical teaching as a means to assist their candidates who were unable to secure teaching positions. As of the date of the compliance audit, the clinical teaching component had not yet been implemented. All six field supervisors were certified teachers with many years of public school service. Two field supervisors responded to their questionnaire. They indicated that they had been involved in field supervision for one to two years with this program. Sixty-nine point three percent (69.3%) of the teaching candidates reported that the field supervisors were effective or very effective. Since no mentor teachers responded to the questionnaires, the TEA staff was unable to gain their perspective on the effectiveness of the field supervision.

According to the self-report (Question #61), Teacherbuilder.com indicated that it provided yearly training for the cooperating teachers/mentors. The program identified Teacherbuilder.com, the school districts, the education service center and online training as means of providing the required training per TAC §228.35. The program indicated that attendance records, certificates of completion, CPE credit records, and school district professional development records were used as verification of training. Evidence of verification of the training was not provided in the document review. In addition, no mentor questionnaires were submitted as an alternate way to verify the training.

Per responses from the teaching candidates, seventy-six point nine (76.9%) indicated that the first contact was made within the first three weeks. No verifying evidence of this was found in the candidates' folder review.

In reviewing fifty-eight (58) candidate folders, only nine folders contained observation forms as evidence of a minimum of three formal observations during each year of the probationary certificate conducted at prescribed intervals as required by TAC §228.35(f)(2) and TAC §228.35(f)(1)(2). The remaining candidate folders had missing observation records especially in the second and third year probationary candidates. Seventy-six point nine percent (76.9%) of

the candidates who responded to their questionnaire indicated that formal observations were forty-five (45) minutes in duration [TAC228.35(f)] followed by an interactive conference. However, it was noted in the candidates' file reviews that the observation forms did not have the start or stop time of the observation noted and were not consistently signed by the candidate as evidence of receipt or conferencing or by a field supervisor as evidence of completing the observation [TAC §228.35(f)]. In addition, it was noted that two different types of observation forms were in the files. It was also discovered that the program was using the formal PDAS evaluation from the school where the intern was employed as one of the formal observations. The school district PDAS evaluation conducted by the campus principal cannot be used as one of the three formal observations. The distribution on the Teacherbuilder.com observation form did not indicate that the administrator received a copy as required by TAC §228.35(f). Per the teaching candidates in their questionnaire, thirty percent (30.8%) indicated that they never communicated with their field supervisor.

According to Teacherbuilder.com, if a candidate is struggling in the program, additional assistance is provided by individual tutoring and by supplying the candidate with supplemental material, such as commercial TExES preparation books, at the program's expense. Evidence of this supplemental material was available at the compliance audit.

**Based on evidence presented, TeacherBuilder.com is not 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:**

According to the self-report and the Teacherbuilder.com curriculum summary on their website, "initial performance on the Teacherbuilder.com web-based curriculum will serve as key formative evaluation data and will consist of benchmarks conducted at various intervals targeted to the TExES competencies. Candidates' progression through the curriculum will be dependent on their performance on benchmark measures of mastery of standards and will require interns to show mastery before moving on to proceeding modules. Candidates show mastery by meeting the standard of 70% on a module quiz and 80% on the final exam." The only evaluation evidence presented in the document review was print-outs of each quiz and the final examination. There were no controls in place to prevent the student from progressing to the next module without passing the previous one.

According to Teacherbuilder.com, the candidates' readiness to test for the content area and PPR is determined by how the individual performs on coursework in the online modules. It was unclear to TEA program specialists how candidates demonstrated a readiness to test due to the inconsistency of data provided as per TAC 228.40(b). According to the self-report, the TExES exam, supervisor observation forms, and curriculum components are used as benchmarks to monitor the candidates' progress through the program. No documents were available in the

candidates' folders or document review to substantiate the use of these items as benchmarking indicators.

The overall program evaluation according to the "Curriculum Summary" published on the website was as follows: "TBC staff is committed to systematically using various forms of data, follow-up of candidates' teaching success, and retention in the profession for continuous program improvement. Program evaluation procedures will include internal as well as external criteria as evidence of the quality of program delivery and will use this data for formative and summative program improvement strategies. Evidence of the quality of program delivery and effectiveness will include but will not be limited to the following: improved student achievement; accountability system for educator preparation data; evaluation of training modules by consumers and instructors; continuous review and update of curriculum for alignment with TExES, TEKS, and TAKS; intern classroom performance as evidenced by administrator, supervisor and/or mentor evaluations; intern performance on the TBC web-based curriculum." No evidence of this evaluation process was available for review. However, in reviewing the certification pass rates and other demographic information available on the TEA website with the Teacherbuilder.com program staff, the staff stated they needed more ASEP training

Student records are kept both paper and electronic format for five years in a locked, secured environment. The program staff indicated an interested in moving toward an electronic only storage format.

### **Candidate Testing and Pass Rates**

According to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP), Teacherbuilder.com has been rated as Accredited from its approval in 2005 through 2010. This rating is based solely on candidate pass rates on the TExES certification examination. During the 2006-2009 academic years, candidates were required to score at least 70% on the initial testing period and at least 80% on the final testing period. With the advent of S.B. 174, the reporting process was changed to reflect only the pass rates for the entire group. The pass rate for the 2009-2010 academic year was set at 70%. Further scores are reflected by demographic categories: all, female, male, African American, Hispanic, Other, and White. If one category scored below the cut-off score, the program was assigned the rating of "Accredited" and an action plan was required. If any program had an overall, specific demographic group, or certification area score below the cut-off for three consecutive years, the program was assigned an accreditation status of "Accredited-Under Review." Teacherbuilder.com has not been required to submit an action plan as result of irregularities in pass rates. However, an action plan was required in 2006 as the result of a monitoring visit where several areas did not meet the requirements of the Texas Administrative Code. The table below shows this information.

### Teacherbuilder.com ASEP Scores 2005-2010

Year	Number of Demographic Categories Below Cut-off Score on Initial	Number of Demographic Categories Below Cut-off Score on Final	Accreditation Status	Action Plan
2005			Accredited	
2006			Accredited	Action Plan due to Post-Approval Visit
2007			Accredited	
2008			Accredited	
2009		2	Accredited	
2010			Accredited	

### Senate Bill 174/Texas Administrative Code §229 Compliance

In 2009, Senate Bill 174 was passed which established four standards for accreditation. The first standard had to do with the TExES pass rate. The use of the initial and final score was discontinued. In its place, the pass rate would be calculated for the academic year from September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>. A phase-in pass rate was determined. The pass rate for 2009-2010 was 70% overall and in each gender and demographic area and certification field. The pass rate for 2010-2011 is 75% and for 2011-2012 a score of 80% will be required. In the Table below, the breakdown for the 2009-2010 academic years shows a pass rate for Teacherbuilder.com of 85%. However upon looking further to tests in each individual certification examination, it was noted that Bilingual Generalist EC-4, Life Science 8-12, all levels of the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities were below the standard of 70%. Some of the certification areas had less than ten (10) candidates tested, so those percentages will roll over into the 2011-2012 year until a total of ten (10) candidates' scores are available to determine the final pass rates. The second standard focusing on principal evaluation of teacher preparation (pilot tested 2009-2010), the third standard connecting teacher preparation to student progress (not piloted as of this time), and the fourth standard focusing on the frequency, duration, and quality of field supervision (pilot tested in 2009-2010) will become reportable during the 2010-2011 academic year.

### Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

Pass Rate Performance:	2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010 70% pass rate
	Pass Rate		Pass Rate		Pass Rate		
	70% I	80% F	70% I	80% F	70% I	80% F	
<b>Overall:</b>	94%	95%	85%	96%	83%	86%	85%
<b>Demographics:</b>							
Male					78%		
Hispanic					77%		
<b>Certification Areas At Risk:</b>							
Bilingual Generalist EC-4			57.9%		60%	57.9%	55.6%
Bilingual Generalist 4-8			0%				
Life Science 8-12							0%
PPR EC-12							69.9%
PPR 8-12							62.5%
PPR 4-8			50%		33.3%	57.1%	55.6%
PPR EC-4						72.7%	47.6%
English Language Arts and Reading 4-8						75%	
Science 4-8			0%			0%	
Science 8-12		0%	50%			50%	
Special Education EC-12					0%		
Social Studies 4-8					0%		

Educational Testing Service (ETS) became the TEA contractor for the development and delivery of the TExES exams in 2006. ETS provided further data in October, 2010, that presents a deeper analysis. Three types of data for the academic years (September-August each year) 2005 through 2010 are supplied: 1) First Time Examinees' Combined Pass Rates on the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR EC-4; 2) Pass Rates by Attempt; and 3) Average Percent Correct by Domains. The complete tables for these data are included in the Appendix of this report. The next section will focus on reports for the certifications fields initially approved by TEA for this program in 2006: 1) Bilingual Generalist EC-4. Discussion will also include the required Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) EC-4 and the Texas Oral Proficiency Test [Spanish] (TOPT) exam. The table below displays data concerning First Time Examinees' Combined Pass Rates on both the content and the PPR EC-4.

### First Time Examinees' Combined Pass Rates on the PPR EC-4

2006-2007		
Test Title	Number of Examinees	Passing Rate
TOPT Spanish	18	44%
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	27	19%
2007-2008		
Test Title	Number of Examinees	Passing Rate
TOPT Spanish	18	17%
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	9	33%
2008-2009		
Test Title	Number of Examinees	Passing Rate
TOPT Spanish	12	50%
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	3	33%
2009-2010		
Test Title	Number of Examinees	Passing Rate
TOPT Spanish	7	43%
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	2	50%

In the first year for which ETS has data, 2006-2007, candidates in the original certification fields for which the program was approved by TEA, showed very low passing rates on their first attempt to pass the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) EC-4 exam. The fact that only eight (8) out of sixteen (16) candidates who took the PPR EC-4 and five (5) out of twenty-seven (27) who took the Bilingual Generalist EC-4 passed on the first attempt, indicates a lack of preparation by the program for the candidates taking this test. The same can be said for the following years, 2007-2010.

The following table displays data concerning pass rates for the candidates' first attempts on the various tests for the original certification for which the program was approved. The complete table showing passing rates is included in the Appendix. Please note that one student attempted the PPR EC-4 exam twenty-eight (28) times and still did not pass.

### Pass Rate on First Attempt

2006-2007		
Test Title	Number of Examinees	Passing Rate on First Attempt
TOPT Spanish	35	100%
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	94	26%
PPR EC-4	16	56%
2007-2008		
Test Title	Number of Examinees	Passing Rate on First Attempt
TOPT Spanish	68	100%
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	105	34%
PPR EC-4	27	44%
2008-2009		
Test Title	Number of Examinees	Passing Rate on First Attempt
TOPT Spanish	101	98%
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	83	39%
PPR EC-4	22	23%
2009-2010		
Test Title	Number of Examinees	Passing Rate on First Attempt
TOPT Spanish	208	99%
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	55	27%
PPR EC-4	18	50%

As is seen in the table, a high percentage of candidates who attempted the TOPT between 2006 and 2010 passed on the first attempt. This could be a result of home language acquisition rather than program preparation for the exam. The passing rates for the related certificate areas do not reflect a similar level of preparation. For example, only twenty-four (24) of ninety-four (94) (26%) first-time test-takers for the Bilingual Generalist EC-4 exam in 2006-2007 passed. From 2007-2010, little improvement in this percentage is reflected. The best passing rate for the PPR EC-4 occurred in 2008-2009 when thirty-nine percent (39%) passed. The data in this abbreviated table reveals that the majority of candidates taking these examinations for the first time failed. Therefore, it is likely that the program did not provide adequate preparation for success on the Bilingual Generalist EC-4 and PPR EC-4 exams. Yet that was the purpose of the program, according to Teacherbuilder.com's proposal in 2006.

The final table below illustrates the average percentage correct for the domains of each test for all candidates recommended for testing by Teacherbuilder.com in any given year. The initial passing standard for each domain for each year is 70%. The final passing standard is 80%.

## Teacherbuilder.com Average Percent Correct by TExES Domains

2006-2007							
Test Title	# of Exam- nees	Domain I	Domain II	Domain III	Domain IV	Domain V	Domain VI
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	136	57%	48%	55%	47%	63%	51%
PPR EC-4	31	71%	70%	61%	69%		
2007-2008							
Test Title	# of Exam- nees	Domain I	Domain II	Domain III	Domain IV	Domain V	Domain VI
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	174	60%	49%	55%	48%	61%	55%
PPR EC-4	59	67%	68%	64%	68%		
2008-2009							
Test Title	# of Exam- nees	Domain I	Domain II	Domain III	Domain IV	Domain V	Domain VI
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	135	59%	52%	56%	51%	65%	55%
PPR EC-4	76	62%	71%	59%	66%		
2009-2010							
Test Title	# of Exam- nees	Domain I	Domain II	Domain III	Domain IV	Domain V	Domain VI
Bilingual Generalist EC-4	90	55%	48%	55%	47%	61%	53%
PPR EC-4	59	67%	74%	60%	66%		

Keeping in mind that the original purpose of this program as stated in the 2006 proposal is to “Provide high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive and classroom-focused,” the same pattern of low performance as seen in the other two data sets continues to be evidence of a lack of program preparation.

### Financial Consequences for Candidates

In addition to low test performance, candidates from Teacherbuilder.com took repeated tests without improving their scores. For example, among those who were reported as finishers in 2009-2010, one candidate failed twelve (12) times before finally finding a content area that

could be passed. Another candidate failed the Bilingual Generalist EC-4 test nine (9) times before switching over to Generalist EC-4 and failing that test before passing. Yet another candidate took the Science 8-12 test nine (9) times before passing. Other candidates failed anywhere from four (4) to twenty-eight (28) times before passing. These repeated failures indicate a lack of preparation and screening for testing readiness by Teacherbuilder.com. This lack of service not only affects academic achievement, it costs candidates additional money. For example, in 2009-2010, candidates paid an additional \$14,640.00 in testing fees for tests they failed. The highest accumulated testing fee for one candidate was \$1200.00, which amounts to ten (10) times what a well-prepared candidate would pay.

### **Complaints**

Since its inception, there have been both informal and formal complaints made to TEA concerning its operation. The complaints have consisted of sending teachers out to school districts for jobs without 30 hours of field-observations (1), not providing appropriate field supervision (5), poor curriculum (2); inadequate test preparation (1); lack of support and guidance (6); and telling candidates they can prepare them for certification areas that they are not approved for (LOTE) (1). According to one candidate, "I feel like I was thrown into the classroom to sink or float, and I did sink." According to another, "I feel that I was treated unfairly and scammed by Teacher Builder. They took my money and serve (sic) no purpose for it...."

### **Conclusion**

According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §229.6 (a) [effective April 18, 2010], the continuing approval of an educator preparation program is based upon 1) accreditation status; 2) compliance with SBEC rules regarding program operations; and 3) integrity of required data submissions. Teacherbuilder.com has continuously been out of compliance with Texas Administrative Code since its inception in 2006. The Texas Education Agency monitored the program repeatedly from 2006-2010 and made numerous recommendations that, if followed, would have brought the program into compliance with all requirements. While Teacherbuilder.com has maintained the status of "Accredited" for each year from 2006-2010, there have been issues in compliance with operations necessitating repeated technical visits. Finally data submitted to TEA has been inaccurate, as the conflict between the base-line data provided in 2009, self-report of October 12, 2010, and the on-site findings from the November 8-10, 2010, visit exemplifies.

## **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 every sixty days until the program has meet the requirements of Texas Administrative Code.

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

**PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: A Compliance Status Report will be required every sixty (60) days until compliance is met.**

**Component II - TAC §227.10 Admission Criteria:**

- Establish a method of documenting test scores in candidates' records reflecting PACT scores (if applicable), basic skills, content, and PPR; (2005, 2009)
- For out of country candidates, require transcript review, TOEFL, and basic skills test scores and place these documents in the candidates' folders; (2009)
- Place evidence of candidate interview documentation (questions, responses, and scoring rubric) indicating adequate oral communication skills in candidates' records; (2009)
- Establish verifiable documentation signed by the program director to approved candidate's admission under the 10% cohort rule and document the limitation of the cohort group to 10%.

**Component III - TAC §228.30 Curriculum:**

- Revise curriculum to add more content methodology coverage for each specific content area offered; (2005, 2006, 2009)
- Increase content covering the 17 curriculum topics in the online modules including reading methodology across the four core content areas and add an instructional technology integration module; (2005, 2006, 2009)
- Include content coverage of the TEKS in the online modules; (2005, 2006, 2009)
- Provide a certified content instructor who is the instructor of record for each certification area offered until the passing of the content PACT is required for all potential candidates (Science, Math, Social Studies, Generalist EC-6, English, Spanish, and Bilingual).

**Component IV - TAC §228.35 Program Delivery and Ongoing Support:**

- Make provisions in the online program for students with disabilities;
- Provide verifiable documentation that coursework and training for each candidate is completed prior to recommending them for a standard certificate (Field-based 30 hours; documented 50 clock hours from the school district, 220 clock hours of online or face-to-face coursework, and internship time period of an academic year or 180 days or a minimum of 12 weeks of clinical teaching); (2005, 2006, 2009)
- Establish procedures to verify documentation of the 50 clock hours of staff development provided by the school district and place documentation in each candidate's folder; (2009)

- Place in each candidate's folder verifiable evidence that initial contact was made by the field supervisor within the first three weeks of assignment (face-to-face, phone call, email, etc.);
- Establish verifiable evidence that three formal observations per academic year for first, second, and third year probationary interns is provided. The observation form should include the field supervisor's feedback, signatures of both field supervisor and intern, date of observation, time or duration of observation, and class content area observed, and identify a start and stop time for the interactive conference following the observation. (2005, 2009)
- Require a field-based observation log verifying the minimum 30 clock hours for all candidates and place it in the candidates' records. Should video be used for 15 hours, the hours and reflections of the videos should also be documented on the observation logs; (2009)
- Require verifiable focused field-based observation activities to be completed during the 30 clock hours that are completed in private and public schools;
- Modify the observation form or create a modified observation report that can be provided to the campus administrator;
- Provide verifiable evidence that the first observation is completed within the first six weeks of the intern's assignment.

**Component V - TAC §228.40 Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement:**

- Establish multiple assessments and benchmarks to determine the candidates' mastery of the content and skills; (2005, 2009)
- Establish and implement a verifiable systematic method of curriculum evaluation; (2009)
- Review on a yearly basis overall pass rates, demographic pass rates and certification area pass rates and report this information in a verifiable manner to your advisory committee members; and
- Create an annual formal written program evaluation report for the advisory committee members and other interested parties that includes ASEP information, stakeholder (principals, mentors, human resource directors, etc.) input, and other pertinent data.

**GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Expand the advisory membership to cover all areas of the state where the candidates are located;
- Use technology as a means to communicate and conduct the required advisory committee members in the state;

- Reflect in agendas and minutes of the meetings specific discussions regarding curriculum design, policy decisions, program evaluation, and field-based experiences.
- Update the website and admission criteria to reflect current requirements for entry into the program;
- Convert program admissions requirements to accepting PACT candidates only into the program;
- Convert all paper files to electronic files;
- Use alternative technology such as blogs, and webinars to provide interaction for students in the program;
- Activate the use of the e-portfolio as a means of collecting, evaluating, and storing student work that is completed for assessment and benchmarking;
- Use multiple ways of assessing the mastery of content by the students;
- Use alternative technology such as blogs, forums, chats, and webinars to provide opportunities for the students to interact with each other, with the instructors, and with program staff. Feedback to the interactions should be consistently available within 48 hours;
- Establish a verifiable student advising schedule/timeline with the instructor and program staff (Suggestion: At the end of every domain, supplemental videos, and test prep);
- Reduce certification fields to be offered by the program so adequate curriculum coverage and instructor support can be provided; and
- Establish an Excel spreadsheet which records the date of interns' school duties, the first contact with the intern by the field supervisor, the first observation within the first six weeks, the second observation of the first semester and the third observation of the second semester. This record should be maintained for all first, second, and third year probationary interns.
- Revise coursework in a format that meets the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) standards.
- Include projects, written response/reflections, lesson plan assignments or modeling of effective classroom management or instruction into the coursework.