



2017 – 2018 Continuing Approval Review Report

Region 20 Education Service Center (015-950)

PURPOSE

Texas Education Agency (TEA) Program Specialist, Kerri Elzie, conducted a five-year Continuing Approval Review of the educator preparation program (EPP) for Region 20 Education Service Center (ESC) on April 2, 2018. Per 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(b), "...An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter shall be reviewed at least once every five years...". Dr. Jeff Goldhorn was identified as the program Legal Authority and Regina Hillis was identified as the primary EPP contact for the review process. Region 20 ESC was approved as an EPP on June 1, 1986. At the time of the review, the EPP was Accredited. At the time of the review, Region 20 ESC was approved to certify candidates in the following classes: Classroom Teacher and Principal.

Per 19 TAC §228.1(c), "all educator preparation programs are subject to the same standards of accountability, as required under Chapter 229 of this title." The TEA administers TAC required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all EPPs in the state. (See the complete [TAC](#) for details.) The five-year Continuing Approval Review was conducted in a "Desk Review" format where EPP staff submitted requested documents to TEA for review.

The scope of this review included: 1) verifying compliance with Texas Administrative Code and Texas Education Code as applicable to all certification classes in all certification routes offered by the EPP; and 2) developing a plan for improvement based on review data, performance indicators identified in 19 TAC §229.4, and self-reported EPP information provided in the Status Report. A Compliance Plan and Action Plan were developed to address plans for quality improvement. Evidence of compliance was measured using a rubric aligned to TAC.

EPP staff participating in the review at various stages were: Regina Hillis and Michael Vrzalik.

DATA ANALYSIS

Information concerning compliance with TAC governing EPPs was collected by means. A Status Report and related program documents were submitted to TEA on April 2, 2018. Additional EPP documents, including records for 10 candidates, were submitted on April 2, 2018. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies of content analysis, cross-referencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence.

FINDINGS, COMPLIANCE ISSUES and RECOMMENDATIONS

"Findings" indicate evidence collected during the review process. If the program is "not in compliance" with any identified component, the program should consult the TAC and correct the issue immediately. A "Compliance Plan" may be drafted during the review that identifies



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compliance issues to be addressed and a timeline for completion. “Recommendations” are suggestions for general program improvement and no follow up is required.

COMPONENT I: GOVERNANCE – 19 TAC §228

Findings

Component I: Governance was not fully reviewed, but TEA noted the following:

- The EPP is approved and accredited with the State Board for Educator Certification and TEA. The EPP is not accredited by any other accrediting bodies. 19 TAC §228.10(a)
- The EPP confirmed in the Status Report that they meet the minimum requirements for support and resources, advisory committee membership, member training, activities, and frequency of meetings. 19 TAC §228.20(b-c)
- TEA has record that the EPP restructured in 2014, and notification was provided to TEA. 19 TAC §228.20(e)
- The EPP has a calendar of activities posted on their website. 19 TAC §228.20(g)

Based on the evidence presented, Region 20 ESC complies with 19 TAC §228 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

Recommendations: None

COMPONENT II: ADMISSION - 19 TAC §227.10

Findings

TEA reviewed the admission practices of the EPP in accordance with 19 TAC Chapter 227, and found that:

- Applicants were informed of requirements for admission via the website, application, orientation, and admission materials. Candidates signed an agreement that they understood the information. 19 TAC §227.1(c)
- Candidates met the degree requirement with original university transcripts. 19 TAC §227.10(a)(1)
- Candidates with degrees from countries outside the United States provided a foreign credential evaluation from an approved entity. 19 TAC §§227.10(e)
- Candidates met the grade point average (GPA) except for two principal candidates. 19 TAC §227.10(a)(3)(A)
- Two principal candidates did not meet the GPA requirements but met program policy for equivalent experience and achievement. 19 TAC §227.10(a)(3)(B)



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- Applicants demonstrated content knowledge prior to admission by either a passing score on a Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) or college coursework. 19 TAC §227.10(a)(4)
- Applicants met basic skills requirements by holding college degrees. 19 TAC §227.10(a)(5)
- Applicants met the English proficiency requirement by degrees earned in U.S. universities or pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). 19 TAC §227.10(a)(6)
- Except for Teach for America (TFA) members, candidates were required to complete an application for admission and submit to screening instruments, such as the Haberman interview and meet a cut score of 26. TFA members' screening was accepted based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Principal candidates were also required to provide recommendations and references that included leadership-specific questions. 19 TAC §227.10(a)(7)
- Candidates were given formal admission letters. 19 TAC §227.17(a)
- Except for TFA members, candidates were admitted to the EPP prior to beginning coursework or receiving test approval. The MOU with TFA was provided and coursework hours documented. 19 TAC §227.17(e)
- Principal candidates met admission requirements. 19 TAC §241.5(c)

Recommendations:

- Based on the evidence presented, Region 20 ESC complies with 19 TAC §227.10 - Admission Criteria.
- The EPP may wish to consider more specific criteria for professional experience and accomplishment that is used for a person whose GPA does not meet requirements for admission.
- The EPP has revised formal admission letters to include cautionary language regarding the preliminary criminal background check.

COMPONENT III: CURRICULUM – 19 TAC §228.30

The curriculum component was not reviewed.



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COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT – 19 TAC §228.35

Findings

- The EPP maintains records of testing history, course plans, program overviews, orientation presentations, and benchmarks that address standards for multiple years. 19 TAC §228.35(a)(1)
- The EPP's coursework and training meets requirements. Teach for America curriculum was accepted due to the MOU. The MOU is reviewed annually by EPP staff for alignment with Texas standards. 19 TAC §228.35(a)(2)
- Program benchmarks, checklists, schedules of coursework, and tracking logs indicate that teacher candidates receive at least 300 hours of training and principal candidates receive at least 200 hours of training prior to completion of the program and issuance of a standard certificate. 19 TAC §228.35(a)(3)
- Candidate handbook, which is online, describes acceptance of military training and experience as demonstration of subject matter knowledge. 19 TAC §228.35(a)(5)(A)
- Candidate handbook, which is online, describes acceptance of training and experience as demonstration of subject matter knowledge. 19 TAC §228.35(a)(5)(B)
- Tracking documents, course schedules, and benchmark documents reflect completion of 300 hours for standard certification. 19 TAC §228.35(b)
- Candidates who were issued probationary certificates completed the required field-based experience prior to internship. 19 TAC §228.35(b)(1)
- Candidates completed the required coursework prior to internship. Online tracking of coursework and requirements was provided. The EPP's computer system generates a list of completed coursework. 19 TAC §228.35(b)(2)
- Principal candidates completed the required coursework and training as documented through completion checklists and tracking sheets. 19 TAC §228.35(c)
- Late hire candidates completed coursework and field-based experience (FBE) within the required timeline. 19 TAC §228.35(d)
- Candidates completed a minimum of 30 hours of FBE, with appropriate logs and reflections. One candidate completed FBE in a university internship for the bachelor's degree. Reflections were provided. 19 TAC §228.35(e)(1)(A)
- Candidates completed an internship, as evidenced by signed district forms. Statement of eligibility forms were provided prior to internship. 19 §228.35(e)(2)(C)(i)
- Candidates who were placed in internships held probationary certificates while completing internship assignments. 19 §TAC 228.35(e)(2)(C)(iv)
- One candidate left the first placement and found a new placement within the same school year. Proper notice was submitted to TEA to deactivate the first probationary certificate. A second probationary certificate was issued for the new assignment. 19 §TAC 228.35(e)(2)(C)(v) and (vi)(II)



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- Documentation of FBEs did not adequately reflect a full range of professional responsibilities, including the start of the school year. In some cases, the EPP accepted an overly wide range of activities, including substitute teaching. The EPP expressed difficulty in securing district cooperation for first of school year and is using video material to meet this requirement. 19 TAC §(e)(2)(F)
- Internships were full documented, including placement, mentor, and field supervisor information. 19 TAC§228.35(e)(5)
- Principal candidates primarily complete practicums, rather than an internship. Practicums were mostly well documented, although some information was not available. 19 TAC 228.35(e)(6)(A)
- Internship and practicum candidates were assigned mentors and site supervisors. 19 TAC §228.35(f)
- Teacher candidate mentors were certified and trained. Mentor guides and requirements were provided. Mentors' required years of teaching experience and professional accomplishment were not documented. 19 TAC §228.2(12) and (23)
- Some site supervisors for principal candidates were trained and certified; however, documentation did not adequately address experience requirements. Certification and service records were not provided for some site supervisors. 19 TAC §228.2(30)
- Training for mentors and site supervisors was made available, but not all were trained. 19 TAC §228.35(f)
- Field supervisors for teacher interns held the required credentials, were trained, and made the required initial contact. Interns received the required pre- and post-conferences and written feedback. Observation documents were signed by appropriate individuals. Informal observations and coaching were not in evidence, although there was some evidence of collaboration via email. 19 TAC §228.35(g)
- Formal observations for teacher candidates met the duration, frequency, and format requirements. 19 TAC§228.35(g)(1-8)
- Field supervisors for principal candidates held appropriate credentials. Principal practicum candidates had record of first contact through emails and sign-in logs from program overview when first contact was made. Email contacts were also provided. Candidates received the required number of observations, inducing pre- and post-conference feedback. Signed observation forms reflect feedback to the site supervisor. There was some evidence of informal observations through email records and observation forms, although documentation could be strengthened. There was some evidence of collaboration with the candidate and site supervisor through email and observation forms, although this documentation could be strengthened. 19 TAC §228.35(h)
- Formal observations for principal candidates met the duration, frequency, and format requirements. 19 TAC §228.35(h)(1-4)
- Principal candidates demonstrated proficiency in the standards as shown by logs, formative/summative evaluations, and standards-based projects.



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Compliance Issues to be Addressed (see Compliance Plan):

The EPP was not in compliance in the following areas:

- Field-based experiences were not sufficiently varied with a full range of professional responsibility, were not sufficiently documented or evaluated, and did not always include the start of the school year. 19 TAC §228.35 (b)(1) and (e)(1)
- Documentation did not include validation of the experience or professional accomplishment of mentors and site supervisors. 19 TAC §228.2(23, 30) and §228.35(f)
- Documentation of required training of mentors and site supervisors was not sufficient. 19 TAC §228.35(f-g)
- Documentation of informal coaching and observations were not present. 19 TAC 228.35 (g) and (h)

Recommendations

- Based on evidence presented, Region 20 ESC is not in compliance with 19 TAC §228.35 – Program Delivery and On-Going Support.
- Region 20 will redesign its field-based experiences process to ensure that all candidates complete 30 hours of FBE that meet rule, including a variety of experiences and the start of the school year.
- Review process for documenting mentor and site supervisor credentials and training.

COMPONENT V: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES AND EPP – 19 TAC §228.40

Findings

- Benchmark information was provided through Candidate Course Plans, Standard Certification Checklists, website and handbook information. 19 TAC §228.40(a)
- Region 20 ESC primarily requires the PACT for admission to the teacher program. Benchmarks and course completion documents are provided for those for whom content approval is provided. 19 TAC §228.40(b)
- The EPP provided documentation regarding eligibility to test and criteria used. An electronic tracking system is used within the candidate portal. 19 TAC §228.40(d)
- Region 20 ESC uses survey information constructed by Stetson and Associates to receive candidate feedback. EPP uses feedback from HR directors, principals, and site



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supervisors. EPP uses the ESC Annual Products and Services Survey to reflect the satisfaction of the end user to create a plan to address areas in need of growth. 19 TAC §228.40(e)

Recommendations

Based on evidence presented, Region 20 ESC complies with 19 TAC §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.

COMPONENT VI: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT - 19 TAC §228.50

Findings

19 TAC §228.50 requires that during the period of preparation, the educator preparation program shall ensure that the individuals preparing candidates and the candidates themselves understand and adhere to Chapter 247 of this title (relating to Educators' Code of Ethics).

- Each candidate acknowledges receipt of a copy of the Intern handbook which contains the Texas Educator's Code of Ethics.
- ESC 20 staff signed a Texas Educator's Code of Ethics. Signature documents were submitted for all staff.

Recommendations

Based on evidence presented, Region 20 ESC complies with 19 TAC §228.50 - Professional Conduct.

COMPONENT VII: COMPLAINTS PROCESS – 19 TAC §228.70

Findings

- Region 20 ESC has its complaints process on file at TEA. 19 TAC §228.70(b)(1)
- The EPP complaint policy is posted on its website, along with a link to the TEA complaints website. 19 TAC §228.70(b)(2)
- Region 20 ESC has its complaint policy posted on the physical site, as evidenced by a picture and description of the physical site posting. 19 TAC §228.70(b)(3)
- The EPP provided complaints information in the form of a candidate handbook. 19 TAC §228.70(b)(4)

Recommendations



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Based on evidence presented, Region 20 ACP complies with 19 TAC §228.70 – Complaints Process.

COMPONENT VIII: CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES - 19 TAC §228 and §230

Findings

- Degree requirements were met with official transcripts and/or credential evaluations. 19 TAC §230.13(a)(1)
- Candidates issued a standard certificate completed the EPP as evidenced by the standard certificate checklist. 19 TAC §230.13(a)(2) and (b)(3)
- Candidates issued standard certificates passed the required exams as evidenced by score reports, which were verified in the ECOS. 19 TAC §230.13(a)(3)
- Principal candidates issued a standard certificate met the testing requirements as evidenced by testing history. 19 TAC §241.20(1)
- Principal candidates who obtained a standard certificate met the master's degree requirement prior to issuance as evidenced by official transcripts. 19 TAC §241.20(2)
- Principal candidates who obtained a standard certificate met the classroom teaching certificates as evidenced by certificates copies and/or TEA website verification. 19 TAC §241.20(3)
- Principal candidates who obtained a standard certificate met the classroom teaching experience requirement as evidenced by service records. 19 TAC §241.20(4)
- Principal candidates who obtained a standard certificate successfully completed the EPP as evidenced by standard certificate checklists. 19 TAC §241.20(5)

Recommendations

Based on evidence presented, Region 20 ESC complies with 19 TAC §228, §230, and §241 – Certification Procedures.

COMPONENT IX: INTEGRITY OF DATA REPORTED - 19 TAC §229

Findings

- For the most part, data for reporting year 2016-2017 was submitted accurately and on time. One principal candidate with a GPA lower than 2.5 was reported on the ASEP GPA spreadsheet, when the candidate had a GPA that met the state standard. One candidate had a GPA lower than 2.5, but was not reported on ASEP.



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Recommendations: None

Based on evidence presented, Region 20 ESC complies with 19 TAC §229 – Integrity of Data Reported.

GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- To ensure continuity in record keeping and other related processes, continue to review and update processes through internal auditing.
- Ensure that all candidates meet the English proficiency requirement, including original TOEFL score reports for applicants who do not have a degree from the United States or approved countries.
- Develop and clearly articulate procedures for accepting candidates under the 10% exception to the GPA requirement.
- Annually review the MOU with Teach for America for compliance with Texas standards.
- Revise formal admission letters to include criminal history information.
- Redesign procedures for accepting field-based experience hours to comply with TAC, including a variety of experiences and the start of the school year.
- Improve documentation of credentials, experience, and training of mentors and site supervisors.
- Stay abreast of changes in the Educators' Code of Ethics and update program materials as needed.

SUMMARY

A Compliance Plan was created collaboratively with the Region 20 ESC staff.