

**Item 16:****Consider and Take Appropriate Action on the Continuing Approval Review for South Texas Transition to Teaching (STTT) Alternative Certification Program****DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

**SUMMARY:** This item provides the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) an opportunity to approve South Texas Transition to Teaching (STTT) Alternative Certification Program (ACP) for continuing approval (5 years) based on meeting the requirements of the December 6, 2019 SBEC Board Agreed Order.

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** The statutory authority for 19 TAC §§229.6(a), 228.10(b) and 229.9 is the Texas Education Code (TEC), §§21.0443, 21.041, 21.0452, 21.0454, and 21.061.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon SBEC approval.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION:** TEC §21.0443 authorizes the SBEC to adopt rules providing for educator preparation program (EPP) approval and renewal of approval. TEC §21.061 states that the SBEC is to carry out a process for reviewing and, as necessary, updating standards and requirements for EPPs. TEC §21.041 allows the Board to set fees for the approval or renewal of approval of an EPP. TEC §21.0452 authorizes the Board to make information available regarding EPPs to the public. TEC §21.0454 authorizes the Board to propose rules that develop a set of risk factors for each preparation program to be used by the agency to guide the five-year review process.

The purpose of this item is to provide the Board an opportunity to approve South Texas Transition to Teaching (STTT) Alternative Certification Program (ACP) following improvements made by the program in accordance with an SBEC agreed order.

At the December 6, 2019, SBEC meeting, the Board approved an agreed order for STTT with conditions that allowed the EPP to continue to operate while making the required improvements to correct identified program deficiencies with timelines for completion. The SBEC Agreed Order is included in Attachment II.

The agreed order included the following conditions:

1. December 6, 2019— as of this date, STTT will not admit a new candidate into the program until a curriculum matrix has been approved by TEA staff for the candidate's certification category.
2. March 25, 2020—STTT will submit curriculum matrices for each certificate category to TEA staff on or before March 25, 2020. Any certificate category for which STTT does not have a TEA approved curriculum matrix by May 25, 2020, will be immediately revoked without further review, hearing, or opportunity for appeal.
3. STTT agrees that before recommending a candidate for an intern, probationary, probationary extension, or standard certificate, STTT will present TEA staff with

documentary evidence of the candidate's hours of coursework and training completed and receive approval from TEA staff to recommend the candidate. STTT may not recommend a candidate for a certificate without written approval from TEA staff.

4. STTT will post notice on the home page of its website stating it is unable to accept new candidates for any certification field for which STTT has not received approval of the curriculum matrix from TEA staff. The website post will include the title: Not Accepting New Candidates.
5. May 25, 2020—STTT must correct all deficiencies identified in the Review Report and submit all appropriate documentary evidence to TEA staff for approval. Any deficiency not corrected by STTT and approved by TEA staff will result in TEA staff making an immediate recommendation to SBEC of revocation of the EPP's continuing approval to recommend candidates in accordance with 19 TAC §229.6(e), without any opportunity for an informal review under 19 TAC §229.6(c) or §229.7.

Through regular monitoring and dialogue with the program, TEA staff determined that STTT has successfully met conditions one, three, and four as listed above. The remaining two conditions required submitting corrective actions in both March and May of 2020, which included curriculum documents for each of the 13 certification areas for which the EPP is currently approved, and documentation to address deficiencies identified in the 2017–2018 Continuing Approval Review Report.

STTT submitted the evidence to address the identified deficiencies by the March 25 and May 25 deadlines. TEA staff reviewed the STTT submissions and found the following:

- (1) The EPP submitted evidence of corrective actions by the May 25 deadline for each of the five areas as listed in Exhibit A of the Agreed Order. The submissions were reviewed by two TEA staff members and were approved.
- (2) The EPP submitted curriculum matrices for each certificate category in all 13 of the EPPs certification areas for preliminary review per the March 25 deadline in the Agreed Order. Final submissions were reviewed by TEA staff by the May 25 deadline. All final submissions were reviewed by two staff members. A total of nine certification areas were approved. The following four submissions were not approved:
  - Math 4–8
  - Math 7–12
  - Science 4–8, and
  - PE EC–12

Per the SBEC agreed order, the four certificate areas that were not approved are revoked. STTT may not admit or recommend candidates for certification in those four certificate areas. Please note that this does not prohibit the EPP from re-applying for these certification areas in the future. Attachment III is the letter that was sent to STTT that summarizes the results of the review by TEA staff that was based on the evidence submitted to correct the identified deficiencies.

**PUBLIC AND STUDENT BENEFIT:** The development and application of EPP review criteria will help ensure educator preparation programs are preparing educators to positively influence the performance of the diverse student population of the state.

**ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP as presented for a 5-year renewal of approval.

**Staff Members Responsible:**

Tam Jones, Director, Educator Preparation

Lorrie Ayers, Program Specialist, Educator Preparation

**Attachments:**

- I. Statutory Citations Relating to Continuing Approval Reviews
- II. Agreed Board Order from December 6, 2019
- III. June 3, 2020, Letter to Director of STTT

**ATTACHMENT I****Statutory Citations Relating to Continuing Approval Reviews****Texas Education Code, §21.041, Rules: Fees**

- (d) The board may propose a rule adopting a fee for the approval or renewal of approval of renewal of an educator preparation program, or for the addition of a certificate or field of certificate to the scope of a program's approval. A fee imposed under this sub-section may not exceed the amount necessary, as determined by the board, to provide for the administrative cost of approving, renewing the approval of, and appropriately ensuring the accountability of educator preparation programs under this subchapter.

**Texas Education Code, §21.0443, Educator Preparation Program Approval and Renewal**

- (a) The board shall propose rules to establish standards to govern the approval or renewal of approval of:
- (1) educator preparation programs; and
  - (2) certification fields authorized to be offered by an educator preparation program.
- (b) To be eligible for approval or renewal of approval, an educator preparation program must adequately prepare candidates for educator certification and meet the standards and requirements of the board.
- (c) The board shall require that each educator preparation program be reviewed for renewal of approval at least every five years. The board shall adopt an evaluation process to be used in reviewing an educator preparation program for renewal of approval.

**Texas Education Code, §21.0452, Consumer Information Regarding Educator Preparation Programs (excerpt):**

- (b) The board shall make available at least the following information regarding each educator preparation program:
- (1) the information specified in Sections 21.045(a) and (b);
- (e) The board may develop procedures under which each educator preparation program receives a designation or ranking based on the information required to be made available under Subsection (b). If the board develops procedures under this subsection, the designation or ranking received by each program must be included in the information made available under the section.

**Texas Education Code, §21.0454, Risk Factors for Educator Preparation Programs; Risk-Assessment Model (excerpt):**

- (a) The board shall propose rules necessary to develop a set of risk factors to use in assessing the overall risk level of each educator preparation program.
- (b) The set of risk factors developed by the board may include whether an educator preparation program is accredited by other organizations.
- (c) The board shall use the set of risk factors to guide the agency in conducting monitoring, inspections, and compliance audits of educator preparation programs, including evaluations associated with renewals under Section 21.0443.

**Texas Education Code, §21.061, Review and Updating of Educator Preparation Programs:**

The board shall, after consulting with appropriate higher education faculty and public school teachers and administrators and soliciting advice from other interested persons with relevant knowledge and experience, develop and carry out a process for reviewing and, as necessary, updating standards and requirements for educator preparation programs.

**ATTACHMENT II**

**Agreed Board Order from December 6, 2019**

Item 14  
 December 6, 2019  
 SBEC Meeting

<p><b>IN THE MATTER</b></p> <p><b>OF</b></p> <p><b>SOUTH TEXAS TRANSITION TO                  TEACHING ACP</b></p>	<p>§ § § § §</p>	<p><b>BEFORE THE STATE BOARD</b></p> <p><b>FOR</b></p> <p><b>EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION</b></p>
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**AGREED FINAL ORDER**

On the 6 day of December, 2019, the State Board for Educator Certification ("SBEC") considered the matter of the accreditation of South Texas Transition to Teaching Alternative Certification Program ("STTT").

This Agreed Order is executed pursuant to the authority of the Administrative Procedure Act, Tex. Gov't. Code §2001.056, which authorizes the informal disposition of contested cases. In a desire to conclude this matter without further delay and expense, the SBEC and STTT (collectively, "Parties") agree to resolve this matter by this Agreed Final Order ("Order").

The Board makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

- (1) On July 3, 2018, Texas Education Agency ("TEA") staff sent STTT the results of the five-year continuing approval review including a report and a compliance plan (collectively, "Review Report," attached as Exhibit A). The Review Report listed numerous discrepancies that TEA staff had identified in the course of the continuing approval review and set out requirements for STTT to meet in order to address those discrepancies on or before August 31, 2019. To date, STTT has not provided TEA staff with any documents to demonstrate that STTT has fulfilled the compliance plan and addressed the identified deficiencies.
- (2) On September 2, 2019, TEA staff made the preliminary recommendation of revocation of approval for STTT based on STTT's failure to respond and address the identified deficiencies in the Review Report by August 31, 2019.
- (3) On October 3, 2019, STTT and Texas Education Agency agreed to enter into an agreed order imposing conditions on the continuing approval of STTT in accordance with 19 Texas Administrative Code §229.6(b).
- (4) Upon the effective date of this Order, the Parties agree that STTT will not admit a new candidate into the program until a curriculum matrix has been approved by TEA staff for the candidate's certification category. This includes the following certificate categories:
  - a. Core Subjects EC-6;
  - b. English Language Arts and Reading 4-8;
  - c. English Language Arts and Reading/Social Studies 4-8;

- d. Math 4-8; Math/Science 4-8;
  - e. Science 4-8;
  - f. Social Studies 4-8;
  - g. English Language Arts and Reading 7-12;
  - h. Life Science 7-12;
  - i. Math 7-12;
  - j. Physical Science 6-12;
  - k. Science 7-12;
  - l. Social Studies 7-12;
  - m. Physical Education EC-12;
  - n. Special Education EC-12;
  - o. Bilingual Education Supplemental-Spanish; and
  - p. English as a Second Language Supplemental.
- (5) The Parties agree that STTT will submit curriculum matrices for each certificate category to TEA staff on or before March 25, 2020. Any certificate category for which TEA has not approved a curriculum matrix by May 25, 2020 will be immediately revoked without further review, hearing, or opportunity for appeal.
- (6) The Parties agree that before recommending a candidate for an intern, probationary, probationary extension, or standard certificate, STTT will present TEA staff with documentary evidence of the candidate's hours of coursework and training completed and receive approval from TEA staff to recommend the candidate. STTT may not recommend a candidate for a certificate without written approval from TEA staff.
- (7) The Parties agree that STTT will post notice on the home page of its website stating that it is unable to accept new candidates for any certification field for which STTT has not received approval of the curriculum matrix from TEA staff. The website post will include the title: Not Accepting New Candidates.
- (8) The Parties agree that on or before May 25, 2020, STTT must correct all deficiencies identified in the Review Report and submit all appropriate documentary evidence to TEA staff for approval. Any deficiency not corrected by STTT and approved by TEA staff will result in TEA staff making an immediate recommendation to SBEC of revocation of the EPP's continuing approval to recommend candidates in accordance with 19 Texas Administrative Code §229.6(c), without any opportunity for an informal review under 19 Texas Administrative Code §229.6(e) or §229.7.

- (9) The Parties agree that if STTT violates any provisions of this Order, TEA staff will immediately recommend revocation of the EPP's continuing approval to recommend candidates in accordance with 19 Texas Administrative Code §229.6(c), without any opportunity for an informal review under 19 Texas Administrative Code §229.6(c) or §229.7.

#### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

- (1) STTT is subject to the jurisdiction of the SBEC and is required to comply with 19 Texas Administrative Code, Chapters 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 234, 241, and 247 and Texas Education Code §§21.044, 21.0441, 21.0443, 21.045, 21.0451, 21.0452, 21.0454, 21.0455, 21.046, 21.048, and 21.049.
- (2) The Board is authorized, pursuant to 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 229 and Texas Education Code §21.0443 to revoke or refuse to renew its approval of an educator preparation program, and to put conditions on its continuing approval of a program.
- (3) The SBEC and STTT agree to the actions set forth herein in lieu of formal revocation proceedings.


#### **IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED THAT:**

- (1) Upon the effective date of this Order, STTT will not admit a new candidate into the program until a curriculum matrix has been approved by TEA staff for the candidate's certification category. This includes the following certificate categories:
- a. Core Subjects EC-6;
  - b. English Language Arts and Reading 4-8;
  - c. English Language Arts and Reading/Social Studies 4-8;
  - d. Math 4-8; Math/Science 4-8;
  - e. Science 4-8;
  - f. Social Studies 4-8;
  - g. English Language Arts and Reading 7-12;
  - h. Life Science 7-12;
  - i. Math 7-12;
  - j. Physical Science 6-12;
  - k. Science 7-12;
  - l. Social Studies 7-12;



- m. Physical Education EC-12;
  - n. Special Education EC-12;
  - o. Bilingual Education Supplemental-Spanish; and
  - p. English as a Second Language Supplemental.
- (2) The Parties agree that STTT will submit curriculum matrices for each certificate category to TEA staff on or before March 25, 2020. Any certificate category for which TEA has not approved a curriculum matrix by May 25, 2020, will be immediately revoked without further review, hearing, or opportunity for appeal.
- (3) Before recommending a candidate for an intern, probationary, probationary extension, or standard certificate, STTT will present TEA staff with documentary evidence of the candidate's hours of coursework and training completed and receive approval from TEA staff to recommend the candidate. STTT may not recommend a candidate for a certificate without written approval from TEA staff.
- (4) STTT will post notice on the home page of its website stating that it is unable to accept new candidates for any certification field for which STTT has not received approval of the curriculum matrix from TEA staff. The website post will include the title: Not Accepting New Candidates.
- (5) On or before May 25, 2020, STTT must correct all deficiencies identified in the Review Report and submit all appropriate documentary evidence to TEA staff for approval. Any deficiency not corrected by STTT and approved by TEA staff will result in TEA staff making an immediate recommendation to SBEC of revocation of the EPP's continuing approval to recommend candidates in accordance with 19 Texas Administrative Code §229.6(e), without any opportunity for an informal review under 19 Texas Administrative Code §229.6(c) or §229.7.
- (6) If STTT violates any provisions of this Order, TEA staff will immediately recommend revocation of the EPP's continuing approval to recommend candidates in accordance with 19 Texas Administrative Code §229.6(e), without any opportunity for an informal review under 19 Texas Administrative Code §229.6(c) or §229.7.
- (7) The SBEC shall determine whether STTT's performance under this agreement is acceptable and shall revoke STTT's continuing approval and assign an accreditation status of Not Accredited-Revoked if the SBEC determines that STTT has failed to comply with the terms of this agreement.
- (8) STTT waives its rights to a contested case hearing before the State Office of Administrative Hearings for the revocation of certification categories, waives any right to seek removal or modification of the revocation of certification categories noted herein, any right to seek removal or modification of the terms of this order, and any right to seek judicial review of this order.

SIGNED this 28 day of October, 2019

  
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Gilbert Gomez  
Chief Operating Officer and Legal Authority  
South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP

On behalf of the State Board for Educator Certification:

SIGNED this 6 day of December, 2019

  
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JIEL DRUESEDOW  
Board President  
State Board for Educator Certification

Exhibit A

The table below provides the program a detailed Discrepancy/Required Action that lists the discrepancy, the agreed-upon action item (from prior reviews), the requested/expected deliverable, and what was delivered to TEA.

Discrepancy	Action Item-Agreed	Requested/Expected Deliverable	Delivered Item
<p>19 TAC §228.36(b) The curriculum is not research-based to ensure educator effectiveness.</p>	<p>Require the EPP to provide a research-based curriculum to ensure educator effectiveness</p>	<p>None identified on Compliance Plan</p>	<p>Research cited: Chow.com</p> <p>Word documents with limited information/instruction were submitted. Provided a series of documents from a variety of sources including a TEA PPT and TAC, and provided some one-page short-answer assignments. No interaction &amp; limited performance assessments</p>
<p>19 TAC §228.35(a)(1) STTT does not provide candidates with adequate preparation and training.</p> <p>19 TAC §228.35(a)(2) Coursework and/or training is not sustained, rigorous, intensive, interactive, candidate-focused and performance-based.</p>	<p>Provide candidates with 300 clock-hours of standards-based coursework and training.</p> <p>Require all training to be sustained, rigorous, intensive, interactive, candidate-focused and performance-based.</p>	<p>Provide course outlines for every course required to demonstrate that they are based on standards for each certificate offered.</p>	<p>Course outlines provided but does not specify what candidates are expected to know and be able to do and do not address specific standards for every certificate offered.</p>
<p>19 TAC §228.35(b) 19 TAC §228.35(b)(2)(A-J) Candidates do not receive a minimum of 300 clock-hours of coursework and training. 150 clock-hours do not occur prior to clinical teaching or internship.</p>	<p>Require the EPP to provide a minimum of 300 clock-hours of coursework and training that is standards-based.</p> <p>150 clock-hours of coursework required prior to internship (unless the candidate is a late-hire) and candidates must demonstrate proficiency in (A)-(J)</p>	<p>Provide a candidate benchmark document for a candidate who has reached standard certification. That document must indicate all coursework &amp; training required for the certificate.</p>	<p>A document provided; however, coursework is a series of handouts and does not meet requirements for coursework. See previous TAC 228.30 for why not accepted.</p>
<p>19 TAC §228.35(a)(5)(B) STTT does not have procedures for allowing prior experience, education or training.</p>	<p>Post the EPP procedures for allowing candidates to use prior experience, education or training on the website, on any admission material, and in the handbook.</p>	<p>Provide the link where the statement is posted on the website, admission material where documented, and handbook where documented.</p> <p>TEA will review the link, admission material, and handbook.</p>	<p>None</p>

**ATTACHMENT III****Letter to Director of STTT, June 3, 2020**

Commissioner Mike Morath

1701 North Congress Avenue • Austin, Texas 78701-1494 • 512 463-9734 • 512 463-9838 FAX • tea.texas.gov

June 3, 2020

Mr. Gilbert Gomez, Director  
South Texas Transition to Teaching ACP  
4426 S McColl Rd, Edinburg, TX 78539

Dear Mr. Gomez,

This letter is to inform you of the results of the review by TEA staff regarding the submissions you provided on behalf of South Texas Transition to Teaching EPP. The submissions, reviews, and results are governed by the Agreed Board Order approved by the State Board for Educator Certification on December 6, 2019.

The Agreed Board Order required you to submit corrective actions in two areas. These submissions would then be reviewed and approved or not approved by TEA. The submissions were as follows:

- (1) documentation to address deficiencies identified in the 2017-2018 Continuing Approval Review Report as outlined in Exhibit A, and
- (2) curriculum documents for each of the 13 certification areas for which the EPP is currently approved.

Summary of Results:

- (1) The EPP submitted evidence of corrective actions for each of the five areas as listed in Exhibit A of the Agreed Order. I am happy to inform you that the corrective actions for Exhibit A have been reviewed by two reviewers and approved.
- (2) The EPP submitted 13 certification areas for preliminary review per the March 25<sup>th</sup> deadline in the Agreed Order. The submissions received the first review by TEA staff and were returned to the EPP with comments. The EPP provided final submissions for 12 certification areas with final revisions which were reviewed by TEA staff by the May 25<sup>th</sup> deadline. The EPP did not provide a final submission for Math Grades 4-8. All final submissions were reviewed by two staff members and I am happy to inform you that nine areas have been approved. The final submissions for Math 7-12, Science 4-8, and PE EC-12 were not approved.

As a result of our review, we anticipate making a recommendation to the SBEC that South Texas Transition to Teaching be approved to continue to operate as an educator preparation program for another five years. You may admit new candidates into the nine certification areas that are approved.

Per the Agreed Board Order, the four certificate areas that were not approved are revoked. You may not admit or recommend candidates for certification in those four certificate areas. Please note that this does not prohibit the EPP from re-applying for these certification areas in the future.

Please let me know if you have any questions. We are pleased that the EPP was able to provide the required corrective actions within the timeline set by the SBEC.

Sincerely,  
Tam Jones