

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Alternative Certification Program was established in 1984 by the 68<sup>th</sup> Legislature in House Bill 72. In this bill, the State Board of Education was directed to provide for the certification of individuals who meet certain requirements, including a year's internship in a public school. IT/ACP began its Alternative Certification Program in 2005 with the idea of adding quality teachers to the workforce in the following area:

## **GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **Absence**

Candidates are expected to attend all training sessions as scheduled. If candidates are ill or cannot attend for any reason, they must contact the IT/ACP office prior to the training and notify the office why they are missing the training. ALL missed training must be made up by the deadline date or candidates may be dismissed from the program. The make-up training should match the topic that was missed. The sign-in sheets are auditable by the State Board for Educator Certification and are part of the requirements for certification. Candidates should not ask for exceptions.

Candidates are expected to attend the entire training session. Candidates leaving early, without prior approval from the Program Director/s may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

During pre-assignment training, candidates who miss one training session may be placed on probation in the program. Candidates missing two or more sessions may be dismissed from the HISD Alternative Certification Program. If there are extenuating circumstances, an intern must meet with the Program Director/s.

During on-going training, candidates missing more than two nights of training may be prohibited from taking the certification test(s) as scheduled.

### **Communication**

Candidates need to stay abreast of all IT/ACP activities and due dates. There are several means of communication available to all candidates to assist them, including the master calendar, email, the IT/ACP web site, telephone, and the IT/ACP office. If there is a concern, please do not hesitate to ask for assistance. The IT/ACP staff is here for support.

### **Graduate Students**

Candidates are considered graduate students while attending area colleges and universities.

### **Paperwork**

It is extremely **IMPORTANT** that all required forms are completed and turned in to the IT/ACP office by the due dates. This is necessary for certification documentation. Incomplete documents or late documents can cause a freeze on IT/ACP activities, dismissal from the program, or can prohibit an intern from getting certified. Reports are completed monthly. IT/ACP files are auditable by the State Board for Educator Certification! It is very important that interns get organized and know when forms are due. If interns have any obstacles

preventing the completion of required forms, contact the IT/ACP office immediately. If release-time forms are not turned in by the fifteenth of the month, building principals will be notified.

### **Participation**

Candidates are expected to be active participants during training sessions and university courses; and should not attempt to grade papers, check email, or conduct other business during this time. They should turn off all cell phones and pagers, or place them on vibrator mode.

### **Professionalism**

Candidates should conduct themselves as professionals at all times. Candidates should treat others with the same respect and courtesy with which they want to be treated.

Each intern must sign in for himself/herself before each training session. Candidates are NOT to sign in for anyone else. Candidates must write the time of arrival if it is after the designated start time.

Candidates are expected to be on time for all training sessions, allowing extra time for traffic, parking, etc. Candidates are required to make up all tardies by the deadline date or they may be dismissed from the program. The sign-in sheets are auditable by the State Board for Educator Certification and are part of the requirements for certification. Do not ask for exceptions. Each tardy is rounded to up 15 minute intervals. For example, if an intern was tardy 7 minutes at one session and 9 minutes for another session, that intern would have 30 minutes to make up – 15 minutes for each session. Excessive tardies will not be tolerated and may have a negative impact on certification.

### **Training Requirements**

Candidates must successfully complete **ALL** training requirements. The training has been carefully planned to address the state teacher proficiencies and the TExES competencies which will assist the intern in the classroom AND prepare them for the certification exams (TExES).

## **INTERNSHIP**

**Duration of Internship** - Candidates serve their internship for one school year, beginning at their time of placement in a classroom as teacher of record. Candidates must be a full-time teacher in the same certification area in which they were accepted into the program.

**Probationary Certificate** - A Candidate is given a one-year probationary certificate by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). Each candidate will complete the application form for this 1-year certificate prior to entering the classroom. Each candidate will pay the \$52.00 fee via a check or money order, payable to SBEC.

The State Board for Educator Certification requires all applicants for an initial credential to be fingerprinted as part of a national criminal background check. Applicants will be required to submit a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint card bearing his or her fingerprints to SBEC. A card may be requested from SBEC through the SBEC Online system. There is a \$47 fingerprinting fee. The agency who takes the fingerprinting may also charge a fee.

**Legal Status** - A Candidate is considered a "teacher of record" with all rights, privileges and responsibilities of any other first year teacher in Texas [Texas Education Code 13.306(2) and

Code 13.037(a)]. A person who has been admitted into an alternative certification program is viewed as having the same first year probationary status as a teacher who has successfully completed all the requirements of an approved teacher education program at an institution of higher education. Alternative certification teacher status is recognized by Texas law and code as being one that affords those individuals hired by a district all the benefits of any other probationary teacher within the district.

A person in an alternative certification program who has taken and passed the appropriate TExES content exam is considered a "Highly Qualified Teacher" under The No Child Left Behind Act.

**Contract Status** – Area districts will issue one-year contracts to the IT/ACP candidates once the candidate is hired.

**Communication** - Candidates are expected to check their e-mail daily and the IT/ACP web site weekly for any schedule changes, etc. Candidates will also use the web site to download the NES TExES Study Guides. The web address is (TBA).

## **Do's and Don'ts**

### **Recommendations for New Teachers**

- Do act like a professional.
- Do not bring your own personal children or family members to ITACP classes or to field-based sites.
- Do turn off your cell phone and put it away while in the classroom.
- Do dress conservatively, tie for males, business attire for females.
- Do what your building administrator asks you to do.
- Do sign in and out at the office for all school visits.
- Do know that other staff members also see how you interact with your students.
- Do document instances of bad behavior as well as accomplishments.
- Do come prepared and on time.
- Do condemn the behavior, not the child.
- Do make sure to have remote access memory with you at all times (i.e., flash memory, USB stick, jump drive).
- Do avoid over committing yourself with school committees and duties during this year as an intern.
- Do preview all instructional materials before using.
- Do complete all duties as assigned to faculty and staff by principal.
- Do get administrator's approval before using a video in the classroom.
- Do get administrator's approval on any communication sent to parents.
- Don't do what your building administrator tells you not to do.
- Don't strike a student or say something that could be misinterpreted by the student.
- Don't be alone in your room with only one student.
- Don't touch students; some students don't want you to touch them in any way.
- Do not transport students in your personal vehicle.
- Do not be on the internet for any reason other than with the students in the context of

teaching.

- Do not chew gum on the job.
- Do not bring work to class other than that you will do with students for the purpose of teaching.
- Don't give students your home telephone number.
- Do not give students snacks or sweets unless board policy allows it and you have building permission.
- Do use common sense.
- Do use individual, cooperative group, and whole group instruction practices and master transitions for the least amount of lost teaching time.

## **THE IT/ACP SUPPORT SYSTEM**

### **The Principal (and Assistant Principal)**

The Principal's and Assistant Principal's role in the support system is that of evaluation and support, facilitated by the following:

- Assigns an appropriate mentor
- Schedules informal assessments such as walk-throughs, conferences, etc.
- Collaborates and communicates with the IT/ACP supervisor, manager and/or director
- Conducts formal state required appraisal by the end of the fourth six-weeks
- Makes recommendation for certification, extension, non-renewal of contract or termination

As a vital component of the support system, the principal is also expected to facilitate the relationship between the mentor and intern by:

- Encouraging interaction
- Providing release-time for observations and conferencing
- Modeling appropriate concern, patience, and positive attitude toward the intern

### **The IT/ACP Supervisor**

As a linking component, the IT/ACP Supervisor is assigned to support the intern and serve as a liaison between the program director, manager, principal, mentor and intern. The supervisor will assist the intern by doing the following:

- Observes and evaluates the intern at least once per month (one visit for the combined months of December/January and March/April). Observations may be announced or unannounced. There is no observation in May.
- Provides additional assistance as needed/requested
- Apprises the program manager and director of intern progress and programmatic considerations
- Collects documents on all activities and forms in the Intern's Documentation Book

### **The Mentor**

The mentor plays a vital role in the IT/ACP support system. **It is mandatory that an experienced, certified teacher in the same subject area, level, and/or special education instructional program is assigned to the intern.** After orientation and completion of mentor training, the mentor will assist the intern by doing the following:

- Provides peer coaching and direct support on a daily/weekly basis to the intern
- Utilizes formative assessment strategies during monthly observations and
- conferences

- Promotes self-reliance and motivation

### Criteria for Selection of Mentors

**Mentor: An experienced, CERTIFIED teacher assigned to assist the candidate throughout the year. The mentor must teach in the same subject area, or grade level, for which the candidate seeks certification.**

It will be the responsibility of the principal to select the mentor.

#### According to the following guidelines, a mentor:

- Has at least three (3) years of teaching experience.
- Is a contract, certified teacher in the same subject area/grade level to which the first-year teacher seeks certification
- Has rating of proficient or better on PDAS instrument for the last three (3) years
- Desires to be a mentor
- Is able to fulfill the requirements as indicated on the first-year teacher mentor job description

#### Mentor teachers should demonstrate knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Establishing a trusting relationship
- Coaching, problem solving and conferencing skills
- Understanding and using teacher development research
- Using strategies to facilitate adult learning
- Using strategies to create positive school culture

#### IT/ACP Mentor Assignment

- **IT/ACP candidates** will be assigned to experienced, certified teachers in the subject areas and/or at the grade level or special education instructional program for which the IT/ACP candidate is to be certified.
- When the candidate is assigned a **mentor from another campus**, a "**buddy**" will be assigned from the same campus as the candidate.

### MID-YEAR COLLABORATION WITH THE IT/ACP SUPERVISOR

- If needed, the principal and the IT/ACP supervisor will meet to complete and sign the Principal/Supervisor Collaboration Form. The assistant principal should be included in this conference if the assistant principal has completed the observations.
- Results of the collaborative conference will be shared with the candidate and the **candidate must** also **sign the form.**
- **An Intervention Plan must be developed at the time a candidate exhibits deficiencies beyond those characteristics of an average first-year teacher.** If the majority of indicators on PDAS are "Below Expectations" or "Unsatisfactory" in any one domain, an Intervention Plan **MUST** be developed in collaboration with the principal, IT/ACP supervisor and candidate (see sample form in Appendix).

### PRINCIPAL'S RECOMMENDATION

- The IT/ACP Supervisor and the principal will collaboratively discuss the candidate's performance to determine recommendation.
- The principal will make a recommendation to the IT/ACP Director based on the candidate's classroom performance. The recommendation will include one of the following:

1. certification
  2. one-year extension
  3. employment termination
1. **Certification** – If the principal recommends initial certification, then the IT/ACP Director will make the recommendation for certification to the State Board for Educator Certification based on teaching experience, principal's recommendation, IT/ACP Supervisor's recommendation, passing scores on all appropriate tests and meeting all program benchmarks.
  2. **One-Year Extension** – There are three reasons a candidate may be granted a one-year extension in the IT/ACP. Those reasons include (a) extended at principal's request when a principal indicates that the candidate needs an additional year of internship to fully develop his/her potential, (b) extended until IT/ACP benchmark requirements have been met, and (c) extended by director's approval due to extreme extenuating circumstances, i.e., death in the family, pregnancy, severe economic hardship, etc.
  3. **Employment Termination** – non-renewal or termination of the probationary contract will be in accordance with TEC 21.103 or 21.104.

### One-Year Extension

#### 1. Extended at principal's request:

- Based upon the request of the principal and in accordance with SBEC rules, the Alternative Certification Program will accept interns from the previous internship year as extended interns.
- Such a request would be made when a principal recommends extension and/or indicates on PDAS with "Below Expectations" or "Unsatisfactory" that the intern needs an additional year of internship to fully develop his/her potential.
- The extended interns will be assigned a mentor and an IT/ACP Supervisor for the extended year.
- The principal, intern, and the IT/ACP Supervisor, will collaboratively develop an Intervention Plan to address deficiencies (a majority of indicators on PDAS are "Below Expectations" or "Unsatisfactory" in any one domain). The principal or assistant principal will continue to do the classroom observations every six weeks and the collaboration form with the Supervisor by Mid Year - Dec/Jan.

#### 2. Extended to complete TExES or other IT/ACP Benchmarks:

If an intern has not completed all benchmark requirements of the Alternative Certification Program, the intern may work an additional year as a teacher. However, the intern must pass all requirements by June of the second academic year; if not, the intern may not continue in the Alternative Certification Program.

The candidate must take a content area exam, pedagogy exam, and be supplemental certified (which may or may not be part of the content area exam) for Bilingual and ESL certification. The following is a description of each of the following exams for certification, Content, PPR, and Supplemental:

**CONTENT** – Content means your area of concentration, i.e., Generalist EC-4. In order to be certified Generalist EC-4, one has to pass a content area and a coordinating Pedagogy & Professional Responsibilities (PPR) exam, either #100 or #160. Therefore, at a minimum, two TExES exams must be passed to be certified in Texas. This exam is offered by paper and pencil

and Computer Administered Test (CAT) online.

**PPR** – Pedagogy & Professional Responsibilities (PPR) must coordinate with a content area of concentration. This exam is all about how to teach content and all content areas, regardless of the type, will have to have PPR along with them. These exams include #100 or #160. Content areas of concentration include Generalist EC-4, Generalist EC-4 Bilingual, or Generalist EC-4 ESL. Therefore, at a minimum, two TExES exams must be passed to be certified in Texas. These exams are offered by paper and pencil and Computer Administered Test (CAT) online.

**SUPPLEMENTAL** – Supplemental certifications are needed when a certified teacher would like additional certification for their content area i.e., Bilingual supplemental certification #102 added to Generalist EC-4 or ESL supplemental certification #154 added to Generalist EC-4. Therefore, for certification with supplemental certification at a minimum, two TExES exams must be passed to be certified in Texas. However, depending if supplemental certifications are taken with initial content area certification tests, the candidate may need to take three TExES exams to be certified in supplemental areas, up to four in Bilingual education with the addition of the Texas Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT). These supplemental exams are presently offered by paper and pencil only.

**NOTE: SEE FLOW CHARTS FOR POSSIBLE CERTIFICATION FOR AN OVERVIEW**

Listed below are the required exams for each certification area. **Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES):**

**TExES Teacher Certification Possibilities**

**For Bilingual/ESL Certification** <http://www.texas.nesinc.com/>

#100 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-4

#101 Generalist EC-4

#102 Bilingual Education Supplemental EC-4

#103 Bilingual Generalist EC-4

#104 English as a Second Language (ESL)/Generalist EC-4

#154 English as a Second Language (ESL)

#160 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-12

**For Bilingual Certification Only**

Texas Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT) <http://www.topt.nesinc.com/>

**IMPORTANT:** In order to receive certification in the state of Texas, interns must successfully pass the required certification tests for their certification area. Interns will register for all certification tests through the IT/ACP office. The IT/ACP office staff will attach a bar code label to their registration form showing eligibility to take the exam.

**Employment**

**Non-renewal or termination of the Probationary Contract will be in accordance with TEC 21.103 or 21.104.**

**Appeals Process:**

1. If a candidate is not recommended for renewal of contract, he/she has no right to due process per IT/ACP Board Policy. The candidate can file a grievance through

the District Dispute Resolution Process.

2. If the candidate's probationary contract is terminated during the school year, the candidate will be provided due process under Board Policy and state law.
3. If a recommendation is made to extend the candidateship for a second year, that recommendation must be submitted to the State Board for Educator Certification prior to October 1st

### **Results:**

- Non-renewal of contract would prohibit the candidate from any future employment in the district that the candidate has worked for during the probationary year.
- Termination would prohibit the candidate from any future employment in their assigned district.
- Resignation/retirement in lieu of termination would prohibit the candidate from any future employment in the assigned district.

### **Probation and Dismissal**

The Intern. Teachers Alternative Certification Program (IT/ACP) is a rigorous path to the classroom that requires adherence to all program requirements and guidelines in order for an individual to be considered for certification. Participants agree to meet specific professional expectations and responsibilities described in the program agreement. Infrequently, a participant is placed on probation and, if insufficient corrective actions are noted, the participant is dismissed. The following cites criteria for probation and possible dismissal:

- ♦ Failure to register/participate/complete training sessions as directed by IT/ACP personnel
- ♦ Signing in for another participant at a training session
- ♦ Tardy arrival at trainings/returning late to sessions from breaks/leaving training early after signing in
- ♦ Inappropriate, unprofessional behavior during training sessions
- ♦ Failure to make up training following an absence
- ♦ Failure to respond to communications from IT/ACP personnel i.e., email, Blackboard, written requests, and phone calls, etc.
- ♦ Failure to submit assignments (electronically or hard copy), documentation, and/or payments on specific deadlines
- ♦ Unsatisfactory appraisal/evaluation results by school district appraiser/IT/ACP consultant
- ♦ Failure to implement “recommendations” for improvement from IT/ACP/school personnel
- ♦ Violations of the Texas Educator’s Code of Ethics
- ♦ Falsification of information
- ♦ Insubordination to IT/ACP program and/or school/district personnel
- ♦ Resigning/Termination from the employing school during the internship
- ♦ Failure to address the requirements of an action plan and to show consistent progress
- ♦ Failure to register and take required state examinations according to the certification area schedule
- ♦ Non-renewal of teaching contract

After being placed on probation, the participant must address all areas of deficiency in order to regain “active” status in the IT/ACP Program. In some cases, approval of the IT/ACP Advisory Board may be required. An intern placed on probation may be responsible for another entire year of satisfactory internship. Although a participant may be placed on probation prior to dismissal, there is no requirement that any individual be placed on probation prior to dismissal.

Severe or unacceptable behavior may result in immediate dismissal or non-recommendation for certification. Any joint decision by the IT/ACP Program Directors to dismiss a participant from the TPC Program is a final decision. There will be no refund of paid fees.

## **Blackboard as a Course Management/Document Sharing System**

- ♦ Blackboard will be used for all assignment submissions on a weekly basis
- ♦ All projects will be submitted through Blackboard
- ♦ All grading will be done through Blackboard and assignments will be tracked for timeliness, quality, correctness, etc.
- ♦ Blackboard will house many documents used in classes each week for later downloads
- ♦ All important State Board of Education (SBEC) files will be housed in a special section in Blackboard with perpetual access, i.e., preparation manuals, continuing professional development (CPE) hours timeline for keeping teaching certificates active, Computer Administered Tests (CAT) such as Pedagogy and Professional Development (PPR) tests, site locations, registration, content area tests, physical locations, dates, certification information, fingerprinting, standards for PPR and Content Areas, Ethics, TexBESS, etc.
- ♦ Blackboard will report grades for all assignments, projects, and other materials the student submits electronically in a timely fashion
- ♦ Email will be used through Blackboard in Blackboard accounts only
- ♦ Blackboard will be used to make known all important information and checking it for such information is imperative for the student to complete on a daily basis
- ♦ Blackboard will be monitored for student use and if students do not log on and actively use Blackboard for two consecutive weeks, student can be dropped from the class and only be resubmitted after re-applying with proper documentation of reasons and signed growth plan by IT/ACP director and the student
- ♦ Students will be need access to the internet on a daily basis, laptops are highly encouraged with high speed internet for interactive classes when assigned
- ♦ Students must have access to word processors, multimedia software, database software, and data transfer capabilities
- ♦ Students will be expected to demonstrate technology skills determined in the standards for all beginning Texas Teachers (information for this will be housed on Blackboard). This includes all necessary hardware, software, peripherals, & connections to internet as deemed necessary
- ♦ All work during classes will be archived, categorized, and burned to CD-ROM as evidence of completed work according to all state standards, competencies, Texas public school student requisite knowledge & skills, as well as continuing professional development
- ♦ A multimedia presentation of all class work for each semester will accompany the submission of CD-ROM archive files in a professional manner detailing salient skills, strategies, methodologies, etc. learned during the course of the semester