

INSPIRE TEXAS

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION BY REGION 4

H A N D B O O K

INSPIRE TEXAS | Educator Certification by Region 4

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Office Hours:

Monday–Thursday: 7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Friday: 7:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

For important dates, deadlines, and other information, visit www.inspiretexas.net.

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Welcome to

INSPIRE TEXAS | Educator Certification by Region 4

Whether you are considering joining the INSPIRE TEXAS program, are a current candidate, or are an experienced educator pursuing an advanced certificate, you will find that this handbook contains useful information concerning each of our programs, procedures, and guidelines. All candidates are required to acknowledge reading the handbook as part of the application process. Please carefully read the content pertaining to your specific INSPIRE TEXAS program. To better assist you in this endeavor, the handbook has been separated into two program areas:

- Teacher Certification Program
- Professional Certification Programs
 - Principal
 - Superintendent

If you have any questions after reading the handbook, please contact the appropriate INSPIRE TEXAS staff member. Our knowledgeable staff members are here to help with any problems or concerns you may have.

This handbook will help guide you through the certification process. Check back often as we periodically update and revise the handbook to reflect changes in rules/regulations and best practices.

Thank you for choosing to serve the students of Texas and allowing us to guide you on this journey!

– *The INSPIRE TEXAS Staff*

INSPIRE TEXAS

Contact Information

Information Center (Main Number)

713.744.6323

Director's Secretary

Martha Cruz

713.744.6595

macruz@esc4.net

Admissions

Amelia Guevara

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aguevara@esc4.net

Program Fee Payments

**INSPIRE TEXAS Office of
Finance Support**

inspiretexasfinance@esc4.net

Preservice Training

Ashley Banks

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International and Puerto Rico Program

Melissa Menchaca

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Teacher Employment Documents/Hiring Process

Tara Thomas

713.744.6802

Tara.thomas@esc4.net

Teacher Internship Requirements

Tara Thomas

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Clinical Teaching Requirements

Camille Chappell

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camille.chappell@esc4.net

**Professional Certification Information
(Principal and Superintendent)**

La Donna Williams

713.744.6307

lwilliams@esc4.net

School District or Campus Issues

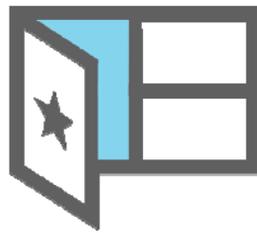
**District or Campus
Administrator**

**Your classroom situation, mentor,
support team, observation, conferences**

Field Supervisor

You may also contact the following professionals through the main phone number (713.744.6323) or by e-mail.

Director, EPS	Rene Ruiz, Ed.D.	rruiz@esc4.net
Admissions	Hayden McWhorter, Ed.D.	hayden.mcwhorter@esc4.net
Preservice Training	Rosario Iglesias	rosario.iglesias@esc4.net
Preservice/International	Rosario Iglesias	rosario.iglesias@esc4.net
Internship/Clinical	Rebecca Hampton	Rebecca.hampton@esc4.net
Professional Certification	Hayden McWhorter, Ed.D.	hayden.mcwhorter@esc4.net
Superintendent Certification	Robby McGowen, Ph.D.	rmcgowen@esc4.net
Financial Information	Natia Childress	natia.childress@esc4.net



INSPIRE TEXAS

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Introduction

Important Dates/Deadlines

Each program has specific dates and deadlines for registration, training, and testing. It is very important that the candidate/intern adhere to program timelines. Failure to complete specific program requirements may delay or even prevent a candidate from being certified. Registration and application deadlines for training, testing, practice exams, clinical teaching, etc., can be found on the INSPIRE TEXAS website at www.inspiretexas.net. All INSPIRE TEXAS candidates should become familiar with the program website, which is updated frequently with new information. It is the candidate's responsibility to meet all deadlines and program benchmarks.

Admissions

Due to the variety of start dates and the modalities of training, candidates should visit the INSPIRE TEXAS website for application and registration deadlines for their desired training cycle. Applications are processed within 5 business days after receipt of all official transcripts from each college or university attended. Transcripts must be sent directly from the college or university via email or mail. Please send electronic transcripts to transcripts@inspiretexas.net. Mailed transcripts must be officially sealed by the university and sent to 7145 West Tidwell Road Houston, Texas 77092-2096, Attention: EPS. Copies of transcripts are not acceptable as official documents.

English Language Proficiency

Effective October 22, 2017, English language proficiency requirements have been amended, including new score requirements for the Test of English as a Foreign Language - Internet Based Test (TOEFL-iBT) [TAC §230.11(b)(5)(A-C)].

Educators who apply for certification after October 22, 2017 are required to demonstrate English Language proficiency by fulfilling one of the following requirements:

- Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree at an accredited institution of higher education in the United States, not including US Territories.
- Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree earned at an institution of higher education in a country outside of the United States approved by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)
- Verification of minimum scaled scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-Based Test (TOEFL iBT)

To have scores submitted directly to INSPIRE TEXAS by Region 4 use the code 4805

- Speaking 24
- Listening 22
- Reading 22
- Writing 21

All applicants with foreign credentials must have a course-by-course evaluation of the official transcripts for US equivalency and verified for authenticity. For some countries (including but not limited to India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Peru), this process may take six months or longer. Please note that the verification is in addition to a course-by-course evaluation. The verification process may delay admission to INSPIRE TEXAS. Registration will not be permitted until verification is complete.

INSPIRE TEXAS, in collaboration with SpanTran, offers these services to candidates at a reduced fee. If the candidate has an evaluation from an approved agency other than SpanTran, the degree must be verified. This service is offered through INSPIRE TEXAS.

Credential evaluation fees are nonrefundable. To view fees associated with all the services described above, please visit the INSPIRE TEXAS website at www.inspiretexas.net.

For detailed admissions criteria for each certification program, including grade point average, please visit the website at www.inspiretexas.net.

Criminal History

All candidates are screened for criminal history prior to admission. Candidates who fail to self-report or who make false statements or omissions of their criminal history may not be admitted. False statements or omissions are cause for denial of admittance to the program or, if the candidate already is enrolled, suspension or termination from the program. Candidates who have been convicted of violent crimes, crimes against a person, or crimes that resulted in a felony charge may not be admitted to INSPIRE TEXAS. In addition, candidates who have a habitual misdemeanor criminal history may be denied entrance at the discretion of INSPIRE TEXAS. Candidates who have any criminal history that took place within the previous five years may face challenges in securing a teaching position. Candidates in this situation will be counseled to apprise them of these potential employment challenges, and a statement from the candidate verifying that he or she understands these challenges and still wishes to continue will be requested. International candidates living abroad should request a criminal history record from local authorities in his or her country of origin or current country. Please note that an application will not be considered complete until all criminal history documentation has been submitted.

All Texas school districts and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) are authorized to obtain any criminal history information relating to an applicant for employment (TEC §22.083). Conviction of a crime is not an automatic bar to employment. All

districts will consider the nature, date, and relationship of the offense to the position for which you are applying. **Acceptance to the INSPIRE TEXAS program does not guarantee employment.**

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides the opportunity for an individual to request a preliminary criminal history evaluation by the agency's Educator Investigations staff. The evaluation is a service provided to the requestor for a nonrefundable fee and allows individuals the opportunity to have a review of an existing criminal history performed by agency staff. The review is based solely on the information that is provided by the requestor, and results are provided as a nonbinding opinion issued by the agency as to whether or not the candidate would be eligible for Texas teacher certification at the time of the evaluation. For more information, please visit the TEA website at www.tea.texas.gov.

Permission to Distribute Contact Information

During the INSPIRE TEXAS application process, applicants are asked to release their personal contact information to potential school districts and charter/private school administrators for prospective employment opportunities. Applicants have the option of keeping this information private if they prefer.

Permission to Access Testing Information and Scores

During the application process, applicants are asked to allow INSPIRE TEXAS staff access to the applicant's exam scores. Applicants who do not grant access to their scores should not continue the application process because INSPIRE TEXAS will not be able to facilitate their certification.

Legal Status to Work in the United States

Candidates who are not US citizens have the responsibility of obtaining the appropriate immigration and naturalization documents prior to entering the classroom. Candidates are required to have work authorization from the US Customs and Immigration Service and must inform both the employer and the INSPIRE TEXAS office of this fact when receiving an offer of employment. The candidate may begin a practicum once work authorization has been received. The candidate must have work authorization on the first day of the practicum.

Candidate/Intern Records

The application process includes a requirement that each candidate submit official transcripts from all colleges attended. These transcripts, along with all items in a candidate's file, are the property of INSPIRE TEXAS. Applicant records are maintained for a maximum of five years in compliance with retention policy.

Official transcripts are scanned and filed for three months. International documents will be returned if the candidate submits the transcripts with a self-addressed stamped envelope. If no envelope is provided, transcripts are destroyed. With a written, signed request, copies will be made **for the candidate only** at no additional cost.

For a fee schedule, please contact the admissions office at 713.744.6323.

Code of Conduct

Applicants to INSPIRE TEXAS are required to adhere to the following code of conduct:

- The program participant is expected to interact with staff members, school district personnel, students and their parents, and people affiliated with the INSPIRE TEXAS certification program in a considerate, professional manner
- The program participant is expected to present complete and accurate information regarding qualifications and program status when communicating with all staff, school district personnel, and other education agencies
- The program participant is expected to adhere to all program requirements and procedures including, but not limited to, timelines, necessary documentation, and correspondence
- The program participant is expected to report to the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions any misdemeanor or felony charge, deferred adjudication, deferred prosecution, or the entry of any plea of no contest to any such charge during participation in the program
- The program participant is expected to manifest a positive role when representing INSPIRE TEXAS for the duration of the program
- All assignments must be original student work and must be completed as scheduled. Instructors do not have to accept late assignments. Any late/missing assignment may be marked as a zero. Any student who receives a grade of zero must repeat the entire course

General Guidelines

Prior to beginning training, all candidates must have reviewed the *INSPIRE TEXAS / Educator Certification by Region 4 Handbook*. Participants are required to adhere to all related rules and procedures. Please note that the electronic agreement is an attestation of understanding that compliance is required with all rules, policies, and guidelines established by the INSPIRE TEXAS program.

All candidates are expected to follow the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

Disclaimer

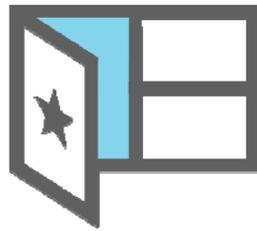
INSPIRE TEXAS | Educator Certification by Region 4 is a state-approved educator preparation program with an award-winning faculty and rigorous curriculum. The course work is designed to prepare candidates for state exams and classroom teaching positions. **INSPIRE TEXAS does not guarantee employment and does not place candidates in teaching practicums.** The candidate is responsible for obtaining employment with a public school, state-supported charter school, or accredited private school within Texas.

INSPIRE TEXAS does notify school districts with candidate contact information when the candidate is eligible for a certificate. It is the responsibility of the candidate to actively seek a teaching practicum.

The Texas Education Agency/State Board for Educator Certification is the sole authority for issuance of all Texas educator certificates. **INSPIRE TEXAS does not guarantee certificate issuance.**

Obtaining Answers to Questions during Preservice Training

- Handbook
- Cycle Instructor, Cyber Coordinator or Blackboard Manager
- INSPIRE TEXAS Education Specialist or Cycle Manager
- Help Desk 713-744-6323 or info@inspiretexas.net



INSPIRE TEXAS

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Teacher Certification Program

Training

General Information

Preservice training must be completed prior to the teaching practicum or clinical teaching assignment. This training lasts approximately 12 weeks for blended training to 21 weeks for online training (these totals are approximate for candidates with foreign academic credentials). The preservice training is a rigorous, intensive course of study designed to prepare candidates for success in the classroom. All training modalities have an online component.

Due to periodic development of best practices and state-mandated policies, preservice training is valid for a maximum of 3 years after completion. An internship or clinical teaching assignment must begin within the 3-year period.

Candidates who do **not** begin an internship or clinical teaching assignment within the 3-year period from the last day of preservice instruction to the first day of the practicum assignment **shall** retrain.

Candidates who choose to retrain and extend for another three years must reactivate their file. The extent of the retraining course work will be determined by the INSPIRE TEXAS admissions department. Additional fees will apply. Candidates who retrain will have an additional three years from the conclusion of retraining to secure a practicum or begin a clinical teaching assignment. Candidates who do not secure an internship or clinical teaching assignment within three years of their retraining may be dismissed from the program.

Teacher Preservice/Prerequisites Training Drop/Refund Policy

Candidates who wish to drop before a training cycle begins will receive a full refund of tuition only. The preservice training processing fee is nonrefundable. If a candidate wishes to drop after classes begin, a written statement to that effect must be delivered to the education specialist in charge of training or the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions. The statement should include the candidate's name, the registration date, and the reason for dropping.

A candidate's tuition will be refunded on a prorated schedule determined from the start date of classes, the date the written statement requesting to drop is received, and the amount of tuition paid. The following is the refund schedule for candidates who drop from teacher certification courses:

Candidate drops before the end of the second week/module:

- 75% of total preservice/prerequisites training fee is refunded if paid in full; or

- 62.5% of payments made, if an installment plan was chosen and two installments were paid; or
- 25% of the payment made, if an installment plan was chosen and only one installment was paid

Candidate drops after the second week and before the fifth week/module:

- 50% of total preservice/prerequisites training fee is refunded if paid in full; or
- 25% of payments made, if an installment plan was chosen and two installments were paid; or
- No refund, if an installment plan was chosen and only one installment was paid

Candidate drops after the fifth week/module:

- No refund

The candidate may choose to defer training for up to one year from written receipt of notice to defer. Any outstanding balance must be paid in full in order to rejoin training.

Teacher Preservice Training Deferral Policy

Candidates who cannot complete the training requirements may defer training for up to one year. A candidate must notify, in writing, the appropriate education specialist in charge of training that he or she is unable to continue with the program and wishes to defer to a later training session. The candidate will have one year from the first training session to reenter and complete training; all tuition paid in a previous session will be applied to the new session. Candidates may change training modalities if they defer training. There will be a \$150 processing fee each time the candidate defers training. A candidate who discontinues training after a second deferment will be dropped from the program. There will be no refund of any tuition paid. International and Puerto Rico Program candidates who wish to defer training will be reviewed on an individual basis by the international program education specialist.

Attendance and Participation Policy

Online

All online students must log in to the current class five times a week to check for messages or course announcements. If the candidate fails to meet these attendance requirements, the online instructor, the cyber-site coordinator, or the INSPIRE TEXAS online specialist will e-mail the student that the course requirements have not been met. This e-mail will be considered a courtesy. Online activity is tracked in the learning management system. The minimum activity to confirm log-in for the day is to enter the current course, check messages, and read announcements.

Online students are expected to turn in all assignments by the due date set by the instructor. Any student who fails to turn in all assignments by the deadline will be sent an e-mail from the instructor or from INSPIRE TEXAS. Any candidate who receives a zero for an assignment must repeat the entire course. Additional fees will apply.

In order to receive credit for training, each student must demonstrate a minimum of 80% mastery in each course. A student who does not demonstrate mastery and does not submit all assignments will be required to repeat the course. Additional fees will apply.

A fee of \$50 will be assessed for all courses that must be repeated due to any of the circumstances listed previously. Dropped candidates may appeal the dismissal to the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions.

Online Course Ground Norms

- Complete and appropriate responses to online discussions are required.
- Off-topic discussions should not be conducted with classmates through Blackboard® messaging, e-mail, or the discussion board.
- Communications on Blackboard and through e-mail should be restricted to course-related topics only unless written permission from the recipient is received.
- Professionalism should be displayed at all times with instructors, classmates, and staff.
- Use of netiquette is expected:
 - Remember that you are not anonymous.
 - Make a good impression; remember that you are communicating with current and future administrators and teachers.
 - Appropriate citations are required when using the work of others.
 - Do not send spam.
 - Use upper and lower case as appropriate.
 - Use correct punctuation.
 - Refrain from using inflammatory language.
 - Refrain from using text messaging grammar; write in complete sentences with correct spellings.
 - Appropriate communication with your online instructor is expected.
 - Candidates must have a final average of 80% in each online course and must meet the log-in requirement of 5 out of 7 days a week to receive full credit for an online course.
 - Inappropriate and unprofessional use of electronic communications should be reported to the online instructor or cyber-site coordinator.

Face-to-Face Portion of Blended Training

Sign-in Procedures

- Candidates must sign in before each session begins.
- Signing in for another candidate is considered a very serious infraction of the rules and is grounds for dismissal.
- Questions or comments about attendance should be submitted in writing to the course instructor or the program specialist.

Absences

There are **no** excused absences. All absences must be made up.

- First absence: Warning (makeup assignment determined by program specialist)
- Second absence: Probation (makeup assignment determined by program specialist)
- Third absence: Removal from program with no refund (appeal must be submitted to Director of Educator Preparation Solutions)

Tardy Policy

- Candidates are considered tardy to class 5 minutes after the regularly scheduled class time. If a candidate is 30 minutes late, he or she will be considered absent.
- Three tardies will count as one absence.
- Only the program specialist will make decisions regarding appeals to the attendance policy. The classroom instructor will verify attendance.

Expected Classroom Behavior

- Contribute to discussions. Class participation is expected.
- Bring the required textbooks, binders, and printed materials to class.
- Personal matters such as phone calls, grading papers, messages, reading, etc., should be handled outside of class times.
- Refrain from off-topic discussions with classmates during instruction time.
- Display professionalism at all times.
- Cellular phones and/or pagers with sound must be turned off during class.
- Firearms, tobacco, and alcohol are prohibited at all training sites.
- Eating and drinking are allowed only in designated areas.
- Attendance is for INSPIRE TEXAS candidates only. Please make arrangements

for childcare prior to attending training each day.

- Adherence to the Educator Code of Ethics is required.

Dress

Dress is casual but respectful. Participants should dress modestly and with the thought that any instructor or guest speaker may develop a perception of the student's professional ability based on the student's appearance.

Exams (if applicable)

Quizzes, evaluations, or assignments may be given at the end of a module. This is particularly true of the Foundations of Education modules.

Lunch

There is no lunch break included in the schedule.

Materials

If a candidate is absent from training, it is the responsibility of the candidate to obtain any missed assignments/materials from the instructor. Unless otherwise directed by the instructor, candidates should bring textbooks and printed material to each class.

Other Training Requirements

Field Experience

Candidates are required to complete 30 hours of field experience **prior to beginning** a teaching internship or clinical teaching assignment. Field experience may include but is not limited to working as a paraprofessional in the classroom, assisting a teacher with setting up a lab or centers, or observing in a classroom. Ideally, field experience should be done in the certification or grade level in which you are planning on training and teaching. Paraprofessional experience in the classroom is permitted if conducted within the year immediately preceding the first day of preservice training and under the supervision of a certified teacher of record. Substitute teaching is not permitted. In addition, INSPIRE TEXAS provides an opportunity for 15 hours to be completed via videos. It is suggested that you observe or assist a minimum of three teachers.

A field experience questionnaire is completed for each field experience activity. When 30 hours are completed, candidates enter the activities, related information, and number of hours on the Field Experience Log. **Field experience forms are located in the candidate's INSPIRE TEXAS account.**

Once the field experience documents have been organized and completed, the

candidate should e-mail them to info@inspiretexas.net. We recommend that candidates keep a copy of the documents for their records. **If the INSPIRE TEXAS office does not receive the documents, candidates will be required to resubmit them.**

International candidates may complete field experience in an American school or a Department of Defense school. If international candidates have questions about other schools, they should contact the INSPIRE TEXAS office for approval at 713.744.6323.

Professional Development Requirement

Candidates are required to complete 50 hours of professional development (beyond the preservice training) prior to the end of the internship or clinical teaching assignment. The 50 hours must be documented and may be obtained by participating in school district professional development activities or through or other approved providers (for an additional fee). A tracking form is included in the candidate's INSPIRE TEXAS account. The candidate submits the completed tracking form, along with documentation of professional development activities, prior to program completion. Forms may be scanned and e-mailed to info@inspiretexas.net. Candidates should maintain copies of these documents for their records.

Testing Information

All candidates are required to take at least two certification exams prior to receiving standard certification. The first exam taken is the TExES content exam. This exam is taken either before or during preservice training. Candidates demonstrate content mastery of the specific subject or certification area they are pursuing by passing the TExES content exam. Almost all districts require a candidate to pass the content exam prior to beginning a practicum. For candidates considering the Clinical Teaching option, the appropriate content TExES exam must be passed prior to the first day of the assignment. Certain certification fields may require additional tests in order for the candidate to be considered highly qualified. Once candidates have successfully completed the mandatory ongoing training course provided during the practicum, they will be given permission to take the second TExES exam, the EC-12 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR). This exam tests the intern or clinical teacher's knowledge of the teaching profession.

Some certification areas, such as Languages Other Than English and Bilingual Education, require additional examinations for certification.

International candidates whose primary language of instruction was not English are required to pass the speaking portion of the TOEFL iBT exam to meet the language proficiency requirement **before** admission to the program.

Once candidates have passed the TExES content exam(s) and the TExES EC–12 PPR exam and have completed all other program requirements, they are eligible to be recommended for a standard Texas teacher certificate. For more information about the exams, including preparation materials, please visit the Educational Testing Service (ETS) website at www.texas.ets.org.

Verification

By completing the application, you certify that you are the person whose name and signature appear on this application and that you hereby give permission to INSPIRE TEXAS to view and use examination results (including those covered under TEC §21.048(c-1)) for the implementation of my participation in the INSPIRE TEXAS Educator Certification Program. This includes but is not limited to the Texas Academic Skills Program/Texas Higher Education Assessment (TASP/THEA) scores through National Evaluation Systems Inc. and certification exams through the Texas Education Agency Educator Certification Online System (ECOS).

Test Preparation

In-depth preparation manuals with practice questions and bibliographies are available to candidates at no charge by visiting the testing website at www.texas.ets.org. For most certification areas, candidates are required to pass an online preparation exam, provided at no charge, through the online preparation company Certify Teacher before receiving TExES test permission. Candidates are required to review appropriate course work prior to attempting a TExES exam. All candidates also have access to online resources such as “Test Taking Strategies,” which is located in the candidate’s INSPIRE TEXAS account. Candidates in EC–6 Generalist, 4–8 Generalist, Special Education, ESL, and Bilingual certification areas have access to a web-based review. Candidates may attend any study session for any exam offered by an outside vendor **at their own expense**. INSPIRE TEXAS offers the opportunity for candidates to take a representative exam (a few of the certification areas are not available in a representative exam). These exams are offered at Region 4 on specified dates.

If a candidate is unsuccessful on any TExES exam more than three times, the candidate will be required to attend a preapproved preparation for this exam before further test permission is granted.

Please visit www.inspiretexas.net for more information about dates and how to register.

Permission to Test

Candidates are responsible for test registration. Permission to take the content exam is granted during preservice training after the candidate has successfully completed the online practice exam through Certify Teacher. Some candidates may be required to successfully pass the TExES content exam prior to beginning training. Registration instructions for testing are distributed during the admission process. In addition, instructions may be found on the INSPIRE TEXAS website at www.inspiretexas.net.

TEA rules require that interns register through the educator preparation entity and are given permission to do so by that entity. Candidates who fail to complete all program requirements may have their permission to test revoked. (Refer to the TEA website for information regarding **content testing prior to admission** to an educator preparation program. This option is available prior to program acceptance and is known as the Pre-Admission Content Test, or PACT.)

Registering for State Certification Exams

Candidates who have been given permission to test should register for the test at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) website, www.texas.ets.org. Please review testing registration steps at www.inspiretexas.net. Prior to registration, candidates will create an account at the TEA website (www.tea.texas.gov). To create an account, click the “TEAL Login” link on the TEA website. Creation of an account will generate a TEA ID number. This ID number is unique to each educator and is designed to eliminate the use of Social Security numbers and thus protect the candidate’s personal information.

International candidates who do not have a Social Security number will receive a temporary “P” number. This unique ID number will allow the international candidate to create an account at the TEA website (www.tea.texas.gov). Creation of an account will generate a TEA ID number. This ID number is unique to each educator and is designed to protect the candidate’s personal information.

Exams are taken at specified testing sites, chosen by the candidate at the time of exam registration.

Exam fees are separate from and in addition to any fees paid to INSPIRE TEXAS.

Exam sites are determined by the testing company. Exams may be taken in locations across the state of Texas and in other designated states and countries. For a complete list of exam sites, current fees, dates and times, registration deadlines, late registration, and score-reporting dates, visit the ETS website at www.texas.ets.org.

Teaching Practicum

Choosing an Internship or Clinical Teaching

Once candidates have successfully completed preservice training and passed the required TExES content exam(s), they are eligible to pursue either form of a practicum (paid internship or nonpaid clinical teaching assignment) to complete state certification. Each option has its own merits as well as limitations. The choice between the two options is an important decision. Please consider this decision carefully.

In addition, state rule requires that all candidates participate in ongoing training during the practicum. All candidates must complete the Beginning Teacher Seminar (BTS) online 4-week course during the teacher practicum.

Teaching Internship

An internship is a 10-month, full-time, supervised teaching position. Most candidates must complete preservice training and pass the TExES content exam prior to beginning the internship. In rare instances, candidates may train and teach at the same time (please ask the school district's human resources director to contact the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions if this situation arises). Candidates must teach a majority of the day in the approved certification area(s). **Paraprofessional positions, substitute positions, or other teaching experiences do not count toward a practicum.** The internship must be served in a public school, state-supported charter school, or accredited private school for a minimum of two consecutive semesters. For a complete list of accredited private schools, visit the TEA website at www.tea.texas.gov and choose the school directory link. A person who has obtained an internship through a state-approved alternative certification program is viewed as having the same first-year status as a teacher who has successfully completed all the requirements of an approved teacher education program at an institution of higher education except that an intern has a probationary certificate during the practicum year. This difference may be reflected in local board policies related to hiring/termination and pay. This alternative certification teacher status is recognized by Texas law and code as being one that affords individuals hired by a district all the benefits of any other probationary teacher within the district.

Obtaining an Internship

While INSPIRE TEXAS **does not guarantee employment**, several resources that may assist in the employment process are available to candidates and districts.

- Human resources directors and school administrators have access to the INSPIRE TEXAS Candidate Search feature to view a list of candidates eligible to begin an internship.
- Multiple job fairs are held throughout the year in the Region 4 area. These events are attended by district personnel officers and administrators.
- Interviewing tips and résumé writing seminars are offered periodically at Region 4 and online.

Note: INSPIRE TEXAS staff members and contract employees cannot provide professional references for candidates.

Hiring Paperwork

Candidates may begin an internship at any point during the regular school year, although ***an internship does not officially begin until the hiring paperwork and the fee payment information are received and verified for eligibility and processed.*** Summer school does not count toward practicum requirements. The hiring paperwork is obtained from the candidate's online account. Payment information is submitted via e-mail to an INSPIRE TEXAS staff member. Upon receipt, the candidate is notified via e-mail with instructions on how to apply for the probationary certificate. An internship does not officially begin until the hiring paperwork is processed.

Teacher Certificates

In order to teach in the state of Texas, all candidates must become certified in a specific certification area. Certification can be achieved only by passing the appropriate state exams and completing the state-required practicum. There are two levels of certification: probationary and standard. The probationary certificate is used during an internship. The standard Texas teacher certificate is obtained at the completion of all program requirements, including the internship or clinical teaching assignment. In some cases, a candidate is unable to complete the internship requirements in 1 year. In the event that this occurs, a probationary certificate may be continued for up to 2 more years for a total of 3 years. When individuals have used 3 years on a probationary and/or any other temporary certificate, they are no longer eligible for any type of temporary or probationary certificate.

Probationary Certification (Required for Internships Only)

A probationary certificate allows an intern to teach in Texas for 1 year while requirements for the standard Texas teacher certificate are being met. In order to be eligible for a probationary certificate, a candidate must pass the content exam

corresponding to the specific certification area for which the candidate has been approved and is teaching.

Professional/Teaching Position Contract

When a contract is signed, the intern is legally obligated to complete the conditions of the contract. Interns may have the probationary certificate revoked for failure to honor employment contracts. Internships must be served with the same employer. Changing employers during the internship is not permitted unless the employer has a reduction in force or there are documented extenuating circumstances. An extended internship and additional **fees will be required in the event there is a change of employer.** In the event of a reduction in force (RIF), the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions will determine additional fees on a case-by-case basis. The Director of Educator Preparation Solutions must give permission before a change is made; there is no guarantee of approval, and additional fees apply.

Field Supervisors and Support Team

Each intern is assigned a trained team to provide on-the-job support. The team is composed of a field supervisor, a supervising campus administrator, and a campus mentor (assigned by the campus principal). The mentor must be both an **effective teacher and capable adult mentor.** Each member of the team has specific duties related to observations and conferences.

Field Supervisor

The field supervisor is an INSPIRE TEXAS representative who provides technical support and assistance to interns, mentors, and supervising campus administrators. Each field supervisor is required to make a minimum of **six observations** during the internship year and is available to the interns at other times as needed. **A minimum of five observations will be conducted during the first 12 weeks of instruction.**

Supervising Campus Administrator

The supervising campus administrator is the principal, assistant principal, or someone in a similar administrative position on the campus where the intern is assigned. The administrator provides campus-level program supervision and support. The supervising campus administrator also is required to complete a minimum number of observations.

Mentor

The mentor is an effective teacher with a proven record of high student expectations and exceptional performance. **A form requiring principal and peers' confirmation of the mentor's proven record as an effective teacher and capable adult mentor is required.** The duties of a mentor are similar to that of a mentor for any other beginning

teacher. The mentor is required to be a certified teacher and to participate in mentor training. Several training options are available. The mentor provides feedback and support to the intern. The relationship between the two is crucial to the success of the intern. This is a support/formative role, not an evaluative role.

Standard Certification

Candidates who have successfully completed all program requirements, paid all fees, passed the requisite certification exams, and successfully completed the internship or clinical teaching assignment are eligible for a standard Texas teacher certificate.

Documentation of successful completion of the practicum includes a review of the intern's district evaluation. Standard Texas teacher certificates are valid for 5 years and may be renewed for another 5 years with completion of 150 clock hours of professional development and application to TEA.

The final recommendation for standard certification will be made by the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions. This decision is made based on input from the field supervisor, campus administrator, and mentor. Issuance of the standard Texas teacher certificate is determined solely by the Texas Education Agency/State Board for Educator Certification. **INSPIRE TEXAS does not guarantee certificate issuance.**

Additional Internship Information

Contract Renewal

Contract renewals are executed according to the local school district board policy. INSPIRE TEXAS gives no guarantee of contract extension. All contract decisions are strictly between the intern and the employer. An intern must have two consecutive successful semesters of practicum with the same employer in the same assignment to be recommended for a standard Texas teacher certificate.

Extending Probationary Certificates

An extended internship is a full-time, supervised teaching position. An intern who does not complete all program requirements may receive an extension on the probationary certificate for a maximum of 2 additional years. Candidates must teach a majority of the day in their approved certification area(s). **Paraprofessional positions, substitute positions, or other teaching experiences do not count toward a practicum.** The extended internship must be served in a Texas public school, state-supported charter school, or accredited private school for a minimum of two consecutive semesters or until standard certification is achieved.

An intern who receives an extension of his or her probationary certificate must be fully

supervised as required by state rules. Supervision during an extended probationary internship will continue until the intern successfully completes the practicum and meets all state and program requirements including, but not limited to, testing, fees, and course work. Interns on an extended probationary certificate will be charged for supervision and testing. For a list of current fees associated with the probationary certificate extension, check the INSPIRE TEXAS website at www.inspiretexas.net.

Second Opportunity Internships

In rare instances, an intern is not successful in the classroom and is not recommended for certification at the end of the internship year. In some cases, the intern may be given an opportunity for a second internship in a different school or district. Second opportunity practicums are determined by INSPIRE TEXAS and are based solely on input provided by the field supervisor, mentor teacher, and campus administrator. Interns granted a second opportunity practicum will pay all related fees.

Additional Fees

Related fees apply in any of the following circumstances:

- Extended internships
- Second opportunity
- District-approved leave of absence exceeding six weeks

The intern also is required to apply to the TEA for an extension of the probationary certificate. The current cost is \$52.*

* Fees are determined by TEA and are subject to change without notice.

Clinical Teaching

INSPIRE TEXAS is approved by TEA to offer a 12-week clinical teaching opportunity. This 12-week, unpaid assignment is offered once during the fall semester and once during the spring semester. When candidates have met the requirements for clinical teaching, they may apply for a clinical teaching assignment (application is found in the candidate's INSPIRE TEXAS account). Candidates typically choose two preferred districts and are placed by the education specialist in charge of clinical teaching. For clinical teaching deadlines, assignment dates, fees, and related information, visit the INSPIRE TEXAS website at www.inspiretexas.net. **The cooperating teacher must be both a capable adult mentor and an effective teacher as recommended by the campus principal and peers.**

Prior to beginning clinical teaching, the following requirements must be

complete:

- All admission requirements,
- Preservice training and all preservice training fees,
- Passing scores on content exam(s)—must be passed prior to submitting the clinical teaching application),
- Field experience, and
- Clinical teaching fees—may be paid in full or arrangements made for four equal payments to be made during the clinical teaching assignment.

During Clinical Teaching

- All assignments are 12 consecutive weeks of unpaid, full-time teaching.
- Candidates serve under a certified teacher.
- Clinical teachers are supervised by a field supervisor during the 12-week period.
- Clinical teachers are not issued a probationary certificate.
- Clinical teachers will be recommended for a standard Texas teacher certificate upon successful completion of the clinical teaching assignment and all other program requirements. The Texas Education Agency/State Board for Educator Certification is the sole authority. **INSPIRE TEXAS does not guarantee certificate issuance.**
- Clinical teachers may not serve in the capacity of a substitute teacher or paraprofessional.
- All absences during the 12-week period must be made up; more than three absences may be cause for dismissal from the clinical teaching assignment.
- Clinical teachers take the EC–12 PPR exam during the clinical teaching assignment; permission to test is given after successful completion of ongoing training and successful completion of the Beginning Teacher Seminar.

Clinical Teaching Guidelines**Observing**

Much of the first phase of clinical teaching will be spent in observation of classroom instructional techniques, interpersonal communication, and relationships. During the observation period, it is helpful to take reflective notes for the purpose of asking questions of the cooperating teacher regarding reasons for his or her interactions and instructional methods. Frequently, asking questions of “why” and “how” will provide a knowledge base for choosing methods for instruction and management.

During this period of time, it also is helpful to make seating charts to learn the names of the students, an important step for quickly building a relationship with the students.

Assisting

After a short period of time in observation, the clinical teacher should be ready to interact with the students. The cooperating teacher may give specific suggestions for activities. For example:

- Monitor student work at the desks to give one-on-one assistance.
- Distribute papers or materials.
- Grade papers.
- Check attendance.
- Assist with end-of-day duties.
- Assist students with makeup work.

Clinical teachers should demonstrate enthusiasm and initiative. In addition, working cooperatively with the teacher will facilitate the gradual change of roles so the clinical teacher will assume full classroom responsibility as described in the timeline.

Teaming

- To initiate the teaching experience in the classroom, the clinical teacher should begin by sharing the responsibility of planning and teaching a selected lesson. This may be done in any number of ways. For example:
 - The clinical teacher may present the lesson “warm-up” and objective while the cooperating teacher teaches the lesson.
 - Divide the class into two groups, with each teacher taking a group for instruction.
 - The cooperating teacher models a lesson presentation, and if there is a repeat of that class, the clinical teacher presents the same lesson.

Teaming allows the clinical teacher to gain some initial experience in front of the class with support from the cooperating teacher. It also allows the students to observe the cooperative relationship of the clinical teacher and the cooperating teacher.

Teaching

After observing how the cooperating teacher prepares lesson plans for teaching in the classroom, the clinical teacher will be able to assume responsibility for planning and teaching a single lesson in a single subject (or period). This lesson plan will be written and submitted to the cooperating teacher prior to teaching in order to gain constructive feedback for revisions and ultimate success. This process will accelerate throughout the first few weeks until the clinical teacher has had experience in creating and teaching multiple lesson plans in all subject areas and periods of the school day.

A gradual increase in teaching responsibility leads to full responsibility in the classroom.

Typical Clinical Teaching Schedule

Week 1:	Clinical teacher will observe cooperating teacher
Week 2:	Clinical teacher will teach 25% of the lessons
Week 3:	Clinical teacher will teach 50% of the lessons
Week 4:	Clinical teacher will teach 50% of the lessons
Week 5:	Clinical teacher will teach 75% of the lessons
Week 6:	Clinical teacher will teach 100% of the lessons
Week 7:	Clinical teacher will teach 100% of the lessons
Week 8:	Clinical teacher will teach 100% of the lessons
Week 9:	Clinical teacher will teach 75% of the lessons
Week 10:	Clinical teacher will teach 50% of the lessons
Week 11:	Clinical teacher will teach 25% of the lessons
Week 12:	Clinical teacher will teach 0% of the lessons

Clinical Teacher's Beginning Assignments

- Focus the majority of time on learning classroom routines and on observing students and the cooperating teacher.
- Learn the names of the students. Develop a seating chart.
- Get all textbooks, handouts, curriculum guides, etc., from the school. Read these carefully. Learn how to use a teacher's guide.
- Fill out the daily class schedule. Provide a copy to the INSPIRE TEXAS Field Supervisor.
- Discuss a pacing schedule with the cooperating teacher and INSPIRE TEXAS Supervisor.
- In collaboration with the cooperating teacher, begin discussion/selection of unit/lesson topic to be taught.
- It may be helpful to organize a clinical teaching notebook with four dividers, as follows. This also can be helpful for future interviews:

1. Lesson Plans

Place a lesson plan in the notebook every time a lesson is taught. Use the appropriate lesson cycle plan that has been provided. Ask the cooperating teacher to initial it before placing it in the notebook to indicate approval of the plan. Keep the most recent lesson plans at the front of this section.

2. Cooperating Teacher Evaluations

Ask the cooperating teacher to provide evaluative feedback and written comments as often as possible (at least once a week). The original sheets should be in the notebook.

3. Field Supervisor Evaluations

Each time that the field supervisor visits, a written performance evaluation will be completed.

4. General Information

Include school and office memos, questions to be answered, INSPIRE TEXAS information, etc.

Removal from Clinical Teaching Assignment

In the rare event that district staff members believe that the clinical teacher is not on a path to successfully completing clinical teaching, an administrator will request that the clinical teacher be removed from the campus. Since clinical teaching assignments are permitted as a courtesy by the district, INSPIRE TEXAS honors these requests. INSPIRE TEXAS will contact the candidate and schedule a meeting at Region 4 to discuss options.

Role of the Clinical Teacher

It is during clinical teaching that practical experiences based on sound educational theory are integrated into real teaching-learning activities from which a working philosophy of education is developed. Clinical teaching is a period of exploration and continuous self-evaluation. Planning and replanning to determine and extend individual abilities are a continuous process.

Responsibilities of the Clinical Teacher to the Cooperating School

- Maintain an ethical and professional attitude toward all members of the school community.
- Become acquainted with rules, regulations, policies, and curriculum of the school to which he or she will be assigned.
- Attend all faculty meetings and staff development sessions (upon request).
- Be prompt at all times and regular in attendance. Attendance is of vital importance, with the only acceptable excuse for an absence being an emergency over which the clinical teacher has no control.
- Report ahead of time any absences or irregularities in the daily schedule. While some absences are unavoidable, it is imperative that the clinical teacher is

present. Excessive absences may be cause for dismissal. In case of absence, the clinical teacher must notify the principal's office and cooperating teacher prior to the time school begins on the day of the absence. The INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor must be notified on the same day. All missed days must be made up.

Responsibilities of the Clinical Teacher to the Cooperating Teacher

- Devote adequate time in preparing for the clinical teaching assignment.
- Maintain a positive relationship with the cooperating teacher.
- Carry out all responsibilities agreed upon with the cooperating teacher.
- Be prompt at all times and regular in attendance.
- Acknowledge that the professional and legal responsibilities of the classroom remain in the hands of the regular classroom teacher.
- Observe carefully the cooperating teacher's lessons and analyze them with the teacher.
- Assume no authority that has not been delegated by the cooperating teacher.
- Assist in keeping a grade book, cumulative records, and attendance records and in planning parent conferences and evaluating students' work.
- Plan each unit of instruction, provide cooperating teacher with written lesson plans, and discuss plans with cooperating teacher prior to the lesson.
- Confer frequently with the cooperating teacher for guidance in planning, evaluating, etc., to discuss deviations from standard procedures in advance.
- Learn to be objective in conferences to work toward overcoming weaknesses and to profit from constructive criticism.
- Report to clinical teaching physically and mentally fit, and show enthusiasm for teaching and learning.
- Become acquainted with pupils by discussing with the cooperating teacher the student's home background, problems, and abilities.
- Maintain confidentiality of all student records.
- Become familiar with school and classroom policies concerning discipline according to the state of Texas regulations and to be consistent with campus and district policies. Clinical teachers may not administer any form of corporal punishment.
- Accept responsibility for classroom control. The pattern of discipline set up by the cooperating teacher should be followed.
- Make every effort to provide for individual differences and to respect the personality of each child.

Responsibilities of the Clinical Teacher to the Field Supervisor

- Help the field supervisor arrange an observation schedule by providing a copy of

the class schedule.

- Seek to understand constructive criticism designed to improve instructional proficiency.
- Provide a copy of the lesson plans at the beginning of the class to be observed in order to assist the supervisor in observation (in addition to providing copies of all lesson plans to the cooperating teacher).
- Keep the supervisor informed of irregularities or difficulties.
- Call the supervisor when illnesses or absences occur.

Guidelines for Orienting a Clinical Teacher into a Classroom

- Include the clinical teacher in classroom activities and experiences from the very beginning. The induction into responsibilities should be gradual.
- Prepare students for the clinical teacher prior to the clinical teacher's arrival. Properly introduce the clinical teacher as a coworker, not as an aide.
- Introduce the clinical teacher to administrators, other faculty members, and the school staff. Familiarize the clinical teacher with the school facilities, resources, and policies regarding the use of materials and equipment.
- Provide a separate work/study area in the classroom for the clinical teacher. A personal desk or table is needed for organization and the development of professionalism.
- Include the clinical teacher in meetings when appropriate; this is where he or she begins to learn about leadership and the profession.
- Provide the clinical teacher with a set of textbooks, teacher's manuals, curriculum guides, or school handbooks as needed and when possible.
- Explain to the clinical teacher the methods of record keeping for attendance, tardiness, grades, conduct, etc. Discuss emergency and health procedures.
- Demonstrate to the clinical teacher how to devise lesson plans and how to use many different resources and ideas. Tell the clinical teacher why specific materials are used and why specific teaching strategies are used.
- Demonstrate the use of curriculum guides and teachers' manuals for the grade level. Make available the appropriate grade level and subject area TEKS objectives and district guidelines.
- Choose a particular time for planning on a daily basis.
- Develop specific and clear policies and procedures concerning classroom management with the clinical teacher from the very beginning.
- Provide frequent evaluations in written as well as verbal form. Remember to offer praise as well as constructive criticism.
- Correct a clinical teacher's mistakes after the lesson, when the class cannot hear any comments being made. When a clinical teacher is corrected in front of the

class, his or her credibility is weakened, and the incident may cause unnecessary embarrassment.

- Gradually give the clinical teacher some freedom so that he or she can have a feeling of independence and a chance to learn from mistakes. Leave the room for short intervals when the clinical teacher is teaching.

Role of the Field Supervisor

It is the responsibility of the field supervisor to assist and work closely with the cooperating teacher to establish the most desirable educational experience possible for the clinical teacher. While the field supervisor works closely with the clinical teacher, in all cases he or she will respect the planning of the cooperating teacher and the policies of the school.

The field supervisor is responsible for the following tasks:

- Serve as a liaison for INSPIRE TEXAS, the school, and the clinical teacher.
- Conduct an orientation meeting with the cooperating teacher and the clinical teacher.
- Give the clinical teacher a preview of the supervisor's expectations for assignments and observations.
- Help the clinical teacher develop desirable standards of conduct while in the school.
- Conduct three formal observations and inform the clinical teacher about any problematic areas that need special attention.
- Hold a conference with the clinical teacher following every observation.
- Assist in developing a comprehensive evaluation of each clinical teacher and, after consulting with the cooperating teacher, make recommendation for standard certification to the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions.
- Maintain communications with the principal to solicit input about the performance of the clinical teacher.



INSPIRE TEXAS

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION BY REGION 4

Master Teacher Certification Programs

Master Reading Teacher and Master Mathematics Teacher Certification

The Master Teacher Certification Programs have their origins in legislation passed in 1999 that required the creation of the Master Reading Teacher (MRT) Certificate. The Master Mathematics Teacher (MMT) Certificate was created by the Texas Legislature in 2001.

The purpose of the Master Teacher Certification Programs is to improve student achievement through the acquisition of a strong academic foundation and to create mentors for other teachers. The programs focus on preparing teachers for the demands of a Master Teacher role through an online course with face-to-face meetings.

To be eligible for MRT or MMT certification, you must:

- hold a standard Texas teacher certificate,
- have at least 3 years of teaching experience,
- satisfactorily complete the Region 4 course of instruction (online and face-to-face) in accordance with the Texas Administrative Code,
- satisfactorily complete the Region 4 field-based practicum, and
- perform satisfactorily on the MRT or MMT certification exam and complete any other applicable requirements for the certificate.

Final determination for issuance of certificates is held solely by the Texas Education Agency/State Board for Educator Certification. The Region 4 Master Teacher Programs **do not** guarantee employment.

General Information

An online learning platform is the primary method for training. However, advanced notification will be provided for training locations.

Log-In

Each candidate must log in to enter each training session. Do not log in for anyone else. Your log-in is your signature and is a professional and ethical statement of your presence for the session indicated.

Absences

Participants must make a serious commitment to the program. Excessive absences may result in being dropped from the program. No fees will be refunded. The program coordinator will make final decisions regarding tardiness and absences. Your cyber-site coordinator should be notified **in advance** of any anticipated absence or as soon as possible following any emergency situation that causes an unavoidable absence. It is impossible to make up the training session experience. However, instructors assign all makeup requirements for any session absence. Participants are expected to log in 3 days per week within each module.

Session Assessments

Quizzes, evaluations, journals, discussion questions, practicum, or other assignments may be required at the end of each session.

File Review

Files are reviewed carefully during training; candidates will be notified of any missing items.

Internship

Obtaining a Position and Eligible School Districts

The internship must be served in a school district for the duration of the cycle. It is the responsibility of the candidate to secure his or her own internship location and mentor. Internships outside Region 4 must be discussed with the program coordinator to assure program supervision availability. The internship may be served in a Texas public school, state-supported charter school, or accredited private school.

Duration of Internship

Internships will begin the first day and conclude on the last day of the program cycle. The internship is generally served in the same district unless prior approval is given. No

guarantee of permission to move is implied; no guarantee of employment is given or implied by Region 4.

The internship requires both field experience and classroom training. Interns, in collaboration with mentors and Region 4 field supervisors, will keep a Practicum Activity Log of the internship hours. Field supervisors will review this information with the intern and all support team members during the initial visit.

Program Retention

Good Standing

Interns who are successful and complete all requirements as scheduled will be considered interns in good standing.

Probation

An infraction of any of the training requirements or other specifications detailed in the intern handbook may result in the intern being placed on probation. The program coordinator may develop a growth plan to meet the individual needs of the intern when appropriate. Probation may be imposed for, but not limited to, the following:

- A. failure to submit documents in a timely manner
- B. absence from Region 4-conducted trainings without prior approval
- C. excessive absences or tardiness to training sessions
- D. failure to make up training following approved absence
- E. insubordination or unprofessional behavior to program or district personnel
- F. exhibition of behavior in violation of Texas Administrative Code §247.2 (Educator Code of Ethics)
- G. field supervisor or district request for improvement
- H. failure to keep fee payments current

Dismissal

Dismissal may occur in the event the intern is terminated from a position under district board policy, falsification of information or documents, failure to comply with training requirements, failure to pay fees in a timely manner, violation of the Texas Administrative Code or Texas Education Code regulations, or upon advice of legal counsel for cause. In the event of dismissal for reason other than those related to district board policy, the intern may appeal to the appropriate Region 4 director. An intern may be removed from the program during the internship for failure to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a Master Reading Teacher or Master Mathematics Teacher or to meet program expectations.

Internship Information

Internship Supervision and Assistance

Each intern is assigned a trained support team to provide on-the-job support. The team is composed of a Region 4 field supervisor and a campus administrator/mentor. A successful internship requires the coordinated effort of the intern, mentor, and field supervisor.

Field Supervisor

The field supervisor is employed by Region 4 on a contract basis in order to provide technical support and assistance to interns and campus mentors. The Region 4 field supervisor is required to provide a program orientation with members of the support team and to conduct a minimum of three visits to each intern during the internship term. Supervisors meet regularly with the Region 4 program coordinator and report observations and conferences.

It is the intern's responsibility to be accessible and provide Region 4 and the field supervisor with a current phone number and e-mail address.

Mentor

The mentor provides support to the intern. The relationship between the two is crucial to the success of the intern. Mentors will coach the intern through a variety of activities and provide feedback about growth and progress toward mastery of Master Reading or Master Mathematics Teacher skills. Mentors should be able to demonstrate competencies in curriculum, instruction, learner-centered climate, staff development, and equity in excellence, in addition to communication and professional leadership. The mentor usually is an instructional leader, preferably a Master Reading or Master Mathematics Teacher, in the campus or district.

Assignment of Support Team

Field supervisors are assigned by the Region 4 program coordinator prior to the beginning of the internship. Location of the school and number of interns assigned are considered when assignments are made. E-mail and phone numbers are provided, and field supervisors are required to have voice mail and working e-mail. Interns are responsible for obtaining a mentor.

Support Team Training

Field supervisors receive training related to intern supervision plus mentorship training. The program coordinator is responsible for training and supervision.

Mentors

Training includes but is not limited to an overview of the Master Teacher Program, responsibilities of the mentor, characteristics of interns, observation and conferencing skills, and collaboration. The field supervisor generally provides training and orientation during the first meeting.

Certification Exams

Examinations Required for Certification

TEExMaT Texas Examinations for Master Teachers (085 Master Reading Teacher, 087 Master Mathematics Teacher EC–4, 088 Master Mathematics Teacher 4–8, or 089 Master Mathematics Teacher 8–12)

TEExMaT Registration

Registration for TEExMaT is the responsibility of the intern. Notification of registration dates, instructions for online registration, and Region 4 authorization for registration will be provided at the appropriate time if:

- internship fees are current,
- attendance is satisfactory, and
- all assignments are complete.

TEExMaT Reviews

TEExMaT reviews are required of all interns and will be provided during face-to-face training sessions. Attendance for all review sessions is mandatory in order to be eligible for permission to test. Please review the course schedule for session dates.

Standard Certification

No guarantee of certification is implied by acceptance into the program or completion of an internship.

The following requirements must be complete before Region 4 will recommend certification:

- Successful completion of internship based on mentor and field supervisor documentation.
- Successful completion of course requirements.
- All fees paid to Region 4 Educator Preparation Solutions.
- All logs turned in with required signatures to Region 4.
- Attendance is satisfactory.

- Passing score on the Reading Texas Examinations for Master Teachers TExMaT.
- Obtain, sign and complete appropriate paperwork for certification application.

The field supervisor and mentor will make a recommendation regarding certification to Region 4. Final certification decisions are based on the data provided to Region 4. In case of controversy, interns may appeal the certification decision to the program director. Please check the ACP Program Participant Grievance Form in this handbook.

Financial Policy

Internship fees are paid in equal increments over the duration of the program. These payments are accomplished through a monthly credit card or checking account debit process. Advance payment on a yearly basis also is available. Please call 713.744.6512 for financial services regarding Region 4 certification programs.

Region 4 does not offer financial aid in the form of grants or scholarships; however, Region 4 is a qualifying entity for a loan offered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The HH Loan College Access Loan is not the same as the Stafford subsidized/unsubsidized loans; applicants must be in good credit standing to receive the loan. For more information, visit www.hhloans.com. For current student loans, you may submit loan deferment paperwork to the INSPIRE TEXAS office for completion.

Additional Program Support Contacts

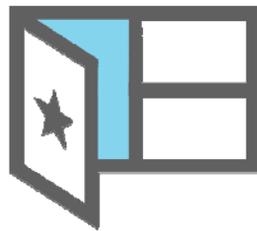
To pay your fees / balance:

Go to www.inspiretexas.net and click on Login (top of the page).

Contact the INSPIRE TEXAS office at 713.744.6323.

For additional information about the Master Mathematics Teacher Program, contact math@esc4.net.

For additional information about the Master Reading Teacher Program, contact reading@esc4.net.



INSPIRE TEXAS

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION BY REGION 4

**Professional Certification Programs
(Counselor, Principal, and Superintendent)**

General Information

History

The Professional Certification Programs are designed for college graduates with a master's degree who meet certain minimum criteria to obtain certification through plans approved by the state; certification is accomplished outside the traditional university setting.

The advantage is that an individual is in the classroom **or** a professional position earning a salary while completing the course work and requirements for certification compressed into a short time frame.

The Professional Certification Programs began in June 1997. The programs focus on preparing school professionals through a collaborative effort involving school districts and INSPIRE TEXAS.

This practicum provides flexible training to meet the specific needs of professionals, and it promotes the recruitment of counselors, principals, superintendents, and other professionals who are minorities. Upon completion of all program requirements, the individual will be eligible for a specific standard Texas professional certificate. **INSPIRE TEXAS professional certification programs do not guarantee employment.**

General Policies

Blackboard is the primary platform for online training. However, advanced notification will be provided for training locations if INSPIRE TEXAS locations are used. Please be aware of rules regarding food and drink at off-site locations.

Log-In

Each candidate must log in to all training sessions. **Do not log in for anyone else.** Your log-in is your signature and is a professional and ethical statement of your presence for the session indicated.

Absences

Participants must make a serious commitment to the program. Excessive absences may result in being dropped from the program. No fees will be refunded. The program coordinator will make final decisions regarding tardiness and absences. Your cyber-site coordinator and instructor should be notified **in advance** of any anticipated absence or

as soon as possible following any emergency situation that causes an unavoidable absence. It is impossible to “make up” the training session experience. However, instructors assign all makeup requirements for any session absence.

Session Quiz

Quizzes, evaluations, or assignments may be required at the end of each session.

File Review

Your file will be reviewed carefully during training. You will be notified of any items that may be missing from your file.

Practicum

The practicum is a unique feature of all INSPIRE TEXAS Professional Certification Programs. This feature has distinguished the INSPIRE TEXAS program from traditional preparation programs and has received recognition for preparing interns to achieve readiness for accomplishing tasks required of entry-level school professionals. However, a successful practicum does not just happen. It requires the dedication, cooperation, and understanding of the intern, the intern’s mentor, and INSPIRE TEXAS personnel. Interns have the outstanding opportunity to establish a partnership and receive guidance from accomplished, successful program and district personnel.

INSPIRE TEXAS Practicum Requirements

Defining the Practicum Position

Be employed as an administrator or a professional support/resource staff member. Generally, these positions require or prefer the coordinating professional certification as a credential.

OR

Remain in your current assignment (e.g., teaching) and be officially designated and recognized in your school and/or district as a professional intern. Preferably, this is accompanied by some regular or periodic release time to accomplish professional duties and program requirements. This release time can be varied and negotiated because of school budget constraints and because of the extended practicum program feature.

IN ADDITION

All professional interns will collaboratively develop a practicum log with the campus/district mentor and INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor. The practicum log is considered a “working document” and will be monitored and modified in cooperation with your mentor as you progress in the practicum. Interns must keep an accurate log of practicum hours. Completion of a minimum of 160 hours is verified by the campus mentor’s signature. The practicum log must be submitted to the field supervisor who will upload it in the INSPIRE TEXAS database.

All interns will electronically submit monthly practicum updates/reflections to the field supervisor beginning on the first month of the practicum. Reflections, updates to the practicum log, and progress toward the capstone project are submitted on a monthly basis to the field supervisor.

The program training sessions, supervisor site visits, and regular reflections provide a strong support system for a successful program and practicum experience. However, the intern’s personal commitment and dedication are primary keys to a successful practicum experience.

Responsibilities of the Administrator Practicum Support Team

The intern will—

- Secure the location of the practicum and the certified professional mentor for the duration of the program. **All mentors must hold the same certification as the certificate being sought by the intern.**
- Meet all course and/or seminar attendance and project requirements.
- Present all assignments on time and in a professional manner. These include, but are not limited to, anecdotal records and reflections, personal portfolio, and requirements of the practicum log. The more you invest, the more you will gain.
- Meet with the INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor and use other methods of communication to keep the field supervisor informed of progress.
- Meet the district’s performance expectations for the professional position assigned, if applicable.
- Attend conferences and seminars as may be required by the district and INSPIRE TEXAS.
- Attend sessions directly related to the school professional certification program as outlined in the practicum log and this handbook.

- Seek consistent counsel and contact with the mentor for full advantage of his or her expertise and to seek opportunities for expanding knowledge and experience.
- Communicate on a regular basis with the support team to share accomplishments and concerns, clarify questions and concerns, report progress in the practicum, and clarify program requirements.

The campus/district mentor (all mentors must hold the same certification as the certificate being sought by the intern) will—

- Review Professional Certification Program materials with the INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor and intern.
- Clarify any items in the materials that cause question or concern.
- Consult with intern in the preparation of the practicum log.
- Provide periodic release time as may be necessary to meet program requirements or fully develop the practicum experience.
- Monitor intern's progress toward attainment of the objectives listed on the practicum log.
- Provide feedback to the intern on a weekly, biweekly, or other regular interval.
- Provide duties, experiences, and opportunities for a thorough insight into the appropriate professional preparation.
- Keep open communications with the INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor regarding the intern's progress.
- Keep open communications with the INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor and provide feedback about the quality of the program to the field supervisor and /or to the program coordinator.

The INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor will—

- Conduct an initial meeting with the intern to review specific professional certification program information.
- Conduct a support team meeting (intern, campus/district, and field supervisor) to review the professional proficiency and certification plan and capstone project.
- Maintain ongoing communication with the team members for clarification and support.
- Visit the intern at least three times during each year of the practicum, with other visits conducted on request or as needed.
- Conduct meetings as necessary with the INSPIRE TEXAS program coordinator and interns to discuss problematic issues.
- Meet regularly with the INSPIRE TEXAS program coordinator to report on observations, interns' progress, and program quality issues.

The INSPIRE TEXAS program coordinator will—

- Monitor progress of interns in instructional courses via feedback from instructors.
- Process all certification requests.
- Make recommendations for testing and certification when all requirements are met.
- Keep interns informed of any changes in TEA certification requirements, best practices regarding school leadership, and updates related to federal and state accountability.
- Support interns, mentors, and field supervisors with all individual needs.
- Update curriculum on an annual basis.
- Provide contacts for technical support with the Blackboard system.
- Maintain intern application and supporting documents in database.
- Assign and coordinate information between interns and field supervisors.
- Monitor intern payment account.
- Coordinate enrollment in training modules.

Obtaining a Practicum Placement and Eligible School Districts

The practicum must be served in a school district for the duration of the cycle. **It is the responsibility of the candidate to secure his or her own practicum location and mentor.** Professional employment decisions are on a district-by-district, campus-by-campus basis. **Practicums outside Region 4 are accepted.**

Accredited public, charter, private, and Harris County Department of Education schools are eligible for practicum opportunities. Some private schools may not be eligible for this program. Positions outside the traditional public school setting must be approved by the program coordinator.

Certification for Practicum

A candidate officially becomes an intern when he or she provides a properly completed Statement of Eligibility (SOE) form to the INSPIRE TEXAS office. **This form can be retrieved from the candidate's INSPIRE TEXAS account upon acceptance into the program.** *Probationary certificates may be approved on a case-by-case basis.* For example, a district has **offered** a professional position that requires probationary certification. This is a 1-year certificate and may be renewed no more than two additional times for a total of three years. Application for certification is made online with the TEA by the intern. A document outlining the proper procedure is found in the intern's INSPIRE TEXAS account.

Eligible Period for Practicum

An intern is eligible to interview for the appropriate professional position throughout the program or when the intern meets local district requirements for the position. Please note the practicum requirements under **Internship**.

Status

Interns who are **hired in a professional position** by the district, have successfully completed the first instructional course, and have received the probationary certificate are viewed as having the same first-year status as a professional who has successfully met the requirements of an approved professional education program at an institution of higher education. Alternative certification 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 professionals within that district. Some districts, however, may require program completion and the standard Texas teacher certificate for specific professional positions.

Duration of Practicum

Practicums will begin the first day of the month after the program begins and conclude on the last day of the program cycle. **The practicum generally is served in the district in which one is employed unless prior approval is given. No guarantee of permission to move is implied, and no guarantee of employment is given or implied by INSPIRE TEXAS.**

Some release time for professional responsibilities is encouraged during the practicum. However, any release time is a local school and/or district decision. Certification requires both practicum and course work and training.

Interns, in collaboration with mentors and INSPIRE TEXAS supervisors, will submit a signed practicum log as well as complete the required capstone project. Field supervisors will review this information during their initial visit.

Program Retention

Good Standing

Interns who are successful and complete all requirements as scheduled will be considered interns in good standing.

Deferral Policy

Candidates in training who wish to continue in INSPIRE TEXAS but cannot complete the training requirements may defer training for up to 1 year. A candidate must notify in

writing the appropriate education specialist in charge of training that he or she is unable to continue with the program and wishes to defer to a later training session. The candidate will have 1 year from the first training session to reenter and complete training. All tuition paid in a previous session will be applied to the new session. Candidates may change training modalities if they defer training. There will be a \$50 processing fee each time the candidate defers training. A candidate who discontinues training after a second deferment will be dropped from the program. There will be no refund of any tuition paid.

Probation

An infraction of any of the training requirements or other specifications detailed in the intern handbook may result in the intern being placed on probation. The program coordinator may develop a growth plan to meet the individual needs of the intern and the district when appropriate. Probation may be imposed for, but not limited to, the following:

- failure to submit documents in a timely manner
- absence from Region 4-conducted training without prior approval
- excessive absences or tardiness to training sessions
- failure to make up training following approved absence
- insubordination or unprofessional behavior to program or district personnel
- exhibition of behavior in violation of Texas Administrative Code §247.2 (Educator Code of Ethics)
- program supervisor or district request for improvement based on poor professional performance
- failure to keep fee payments current

Practicum

- Intern is accepted to an approved professional or professional intern position.
- Intern will keep an anecdotal record or reflection of activities and experiences.
- Intern will develop a professional portfolio.
- Intern will complete INSPIRE TEXAS monthly seminars online during the practicum
 - Review progress and problems of practicum.
 - Discuss special topics and issues and prepare related assignments.
- Interns will attend workshops and conferences as may be required by district and INSPIRE TEXAS in accordance with the professional proficiency and certification plan (PPCP).
- Interns will demonstrate successful performance on the capstone project and PPCP.

- Interns take their professional TExES exam at the end of the practicum.

Practicum Supervision and Assistance

Each intern is assigned a trained support team to provide on-the-job support. The team is composed of an INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor and a campus mentor. ***Mentors must be certified in the same certification area as the intern.*** A successful practicum requires the coordinated effort of the intern, mentor, and field supervisor. Please note the responsibilities document under **Internship Information**.

Field Supervisor

The field supervisor is employed by INSPIRE TEXAS on a contract basis in order to provide technical support and assistance to interns and campus mentors. The INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor is required to make a minimum of three visits to each intern during the practicum. Supervisors meet regularly with the INSPIRE TEXAS program coordinator and report on observations and conferences. Supervisors are experienced, successful campus/district professionals.

It is the intern's responsibility to be accessible and provide INSPIRE TEXAS and the field supervisor with a current phone number and e-mail address.

Mentor

The duties of a mentor are similar to those of a mentor for any other beginning professional. The focus of the training is somewhat different because the mentor will be working with an intern who has had no, or limited, professional experience and little time to internalize professional theory. The mentor provides **support** to the intern. The relationship between the two is crucial to the success of the intern. ***Mentors will coach the intern through a variety of professional activities and provide feedback about growth and progress toward mastery of required professional skills.***

Mentors should be able to demonstrate competencies in the area of certification in addition to communication and professional ethics.

Assignment of Support Team

- Field supervisors are assigned by the INSPIRE TEXAS program coordinator prior to the beginning of the practicum. The location of the school and the number of interns assigned are considered when assignments are made. E-mail and phone numbers are provided; supervisors are required to have voice mail and working e-mail.

- The mentors for the principal and counselor programs are campus-based certified individuals. They must hold the Texas certification the intern is seeking. The superintendent mentor may be a current immediate supervisor who holds the Texas superintendent certification.

Support Team Training

Field Supervisors

Field supervisors receive training related to intern supervision plus mentorship training. The program coordinator is responsible for training and supervision.

Mentors

Training includes, but is not limited to, an overview of the INSPIRE TEXAS program, responsibilities of the mentor, characteristics of interns, observation and conferencing skills, and collaboration. The field supervisor generally provides training and orientation during the first meeting at the mentor's campus.

Examinations Required for Certification

Texas Examination of Education Standards (TExES)

- Principal (068)
- Superintendent (195)
- Counselor (152)

TExES Registration

Registration for TExES is the responsibility of the intern. Notification of registration dates, instructions for online registration, and INSPIRE TEXAS authorization for registration will be provided at the appropriate time for each program cycle **if practicum fees are current, attendance is satisfactory, and all assignments are complete.**

TExES Reviews

TExES reviews are required of all interns and will be provided during training sessions. Please review course schedule for session dates.

Standard Certification

No guarantee of certification is implied by acceptance into the program or completion of a practicum. The following requirements must be completed before INSPIRE TEXAS will recommend certification to the state/TEA:

- Successful completion of practicum (based on mentor and field supervisor documentation).
- The field supervisor and mentor will make a recommendation to INSPIRE TEXAS regarding certification. Final certification decisions are based upon the data provided to INSPIRE TEXAS. In case of controversy, interns may appeal the certification decision to the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions.
- Recommendation for renewal of contract, if applicable.
- All fees paid to INSPIRE TEXAS.
- All assignments complete (capstone project and PPCP/log submitted with all required signatures to the intern's observation record in the INSPIRE TEXAS database).
- Attendance is satisfactory.
- Passing score on the professional TExES.
 - **Interns have two opportunities to pass the required TExES. If additional testing opportunities are needed, test approval will be removed until a preparation plan is developed and completed with the intern and the INSPIRE TEXAS program coordinator.**
 - Certify Teacher Prep will be available at no cost to the intern for the first year after his or her program cycle end date. However, a fee of \$110 will be assessed for access outside the 1-year cycle end date.
 - **Interns will continue to be enrolled in the program until they successfully pass the state exam. In the event the time needed exceeds 1 year of program cycle end date, additional retraining will be required.**
- Obtain, sign, and complete appropriate paperwork for certification application.

Financial Policy

Practicum fees are paid in equal increments over the duration of the program. These payments are accomplished through a *monthly* credit card or checking account debit process. Advance payment on an annual basis also is available. A discount is available for advance payment. Please call 713.744.6512 for financial services regarding INSPIRE TEXAS certification programs

Refunds are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The request must be made in writing to the education specialist in charge.

INSPIRE TEXAS does not offer financial aid in the form of grants or scholarships; however, INSPIRE TEXAS is a qualifying entity for a loan offered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The HH Loan College Access Loan is not the same as the Stafford subsidized/unsubsidized loans. Applicants must be in good credit standing to receive the loan. For more loan information, visit www.hhloans.com, the College Access Loan Program (CAL).

For current student loans, you may submit loan deferment paperwork to the finance office for completion. This does not guarantee that the deferment request will be accepted by the issuing loan company.

Program Support Contacts

A friend is interested in the professional certification program.

Ask the friend to visit the INSPIRE TEXAS website (www.inspiretexas.net).

A district or campus issue

Contact your administrator or supervisor.

Your professional/intern situation, mentor, observation, and conferencing requirements

Contact your campus mentor and/or INSPIRE TEXAS field supervisor.

To pay your fees/balance

Go to www.inspiretexas.net.

Questions about fees/balance

Call 713.744.6512.

Program announcements, requirements, or new information

Contact your program site instructor; check the program syllabi or the Blackboard website (tvs.esc4.net).

Certification questions

Contact an INSPIRE TEXAS education specialist at 713.744.6338.

E-mail is the preferred method of initial contact with the above individuals.



INSPIRE TEXAS
EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION BY REGION 4

Dismissal, Grievance, and Complaint Policy and Procedure

Dismissal

Dismissal may occur in the event the participant is terminated due to violation of the Texas Professional Code (Code of Ethics) or Texas Education Code regulations, failure to comply with training requirements, insubordination, refusal to follow a staff member's directive, lack of payment, or for other reasons deemed appropriate by a program specialist. The participant is then notified of this decision by the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions.

An intern or clinical teacher may be dismissed from the practicum or the program by violating district board policy, falsification of information or documents, failure to comply with training requirements, failure to pay fees in a timely manner, violation of the Texas Professional Code (Code of Ethics) or Texas Education Code regulations, or upon advice of legal counsel for cause. In the event of dismissal for reasons other than those related to district board policy, the intern may appeal to the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions.

A clinical teacher or intern may be removed from the program during the practicum for failure to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a professional educator or failure to meet program expectations.

If the participant does not agree with the decision of the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions, he or she may appeal to the Deputy Executive Director of Support Services within 5 business days in writing.

Complaint and Grievance Policy

A participant complaint or grievance exists when a participant claims that a violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of an INSPIRE TEXAS program policy, procedure, or practice has occurred. A participant filing a complaint or grievance should follow the procedures outlined as follows. All timelines must be strictly adhered to and can be modified only by mutual written consent.

Informal Process

INSPIRE TEXAS believes that all problems should be resolved as quickly as possible at the lowest administrative level. Therefore, before the formal complaint and grievance process is instituted, the participant is expected to meet with the person whom he or she believes has violated, misapplied, or misinterpreted the policy or procedure. This meeting shall be scheduled no later than 15 business days after the date the participant knew, or through the exercise of reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action that gave rise to the complaint. A participant alleging discrimination will not be required to meet with the person against whom the complaint is brought; in that case, the participant will meet with the Deputy Executive Director of Support

Services.

If the participant is not satisfied with the results of the informal process, he or she should initiate the formal process no later than 20 business days after the date the participant knew, or through the exercise of reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action that gave rise to the complaint or grievance.

Formal Process

Complaints or grievances shall be submitted in writing and in the form prescribed by the Center (refer to Appendix F). A complaint or grievance must specify the individual harm alleged, state the relief requested, and include all documents and other supporting materials.

- Complaints and grievances shall be heard in informal administrative conferences at all levels. Participants are not entitled to full evidentiary hearings or “mini-trials” at any level.
- All deadlines shall be strictly adhered to unless extended in writing by mutual consent of the grievant and INSPIRE TEXAS program administration.
- If the participant is not satisfied with the result of a conference at any level, the participant has 5 business days to appeal the decision to the next level. The complaint shall be considered concluded and the administration’s decision final if at any level the participant does not appeal the decision within the required time limit.
- Cost of any complaints or grievances shall be paid by the party incurring them.
- Under no circumstances shall a participant be required to present allegations of harassment to the person who is the subject of the grievance.
- A participant is prohibited from bringing separate or serial complaints and/or grievances regarding the same event or action.
- The Deputy Executive Director of Support Services may permit the consolidation of two or more complaints and/or grievances when it is determined that the complaints or grievances are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy.

Level One

- The participant must submit the complaint or grievance in writing, on the form provided by the Center, to the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions.
- The Director of Educator Preparation Solutions or a designee will hold a conference with the participant within 5 business days after receipt of the written complaint.
- The Director of Educator Preparation Solutions shall have 5 business days following the conference to provide the participant with a written response.

Level Two

- If the outcome of the conference at Level One is not to the participant's satisfaction, or if the time for a response has expired, the participant may appeal the decision to the Deputy Executive Director of Support Services.
- The notice of appeal must be filed in writing, on the form provided by the Center (refer to Appendix F), within 5 business days after receipt of a response, or if no response is received, within 10 business days of the response deadline at Level One.
- The Deputy Executive Director of Support Services or designee will hold a conference with the participant within 5 business days after receipt of the written appeal. At the conference, the Deputy Executive Director of Support Services or designee shall consider only the documents and issues presented at the preceding level and identified in the appeal notice.
- The Deputy Executive Director of Support Services shall have 5 business days following the conference to provide the participant with a written response.

Withdrawal

The participant may withdraw the complaint or grievance at any time.

No reprisals

No reprisals shall be taken against any participant because of participation in a complaint or grievance.

For complaints against an educator preparation program (to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) only):

The (TEA) complaint process allows for an applicant or a candidate in an educator preparation program to seek redress in areas where they feel that the program did not fulfill requirements for certification or for actions that the candidate feels are wrong. Educator preparation programs also may file a complaint about the actions of other programs when it involves a candidate transferring into a program.

Not all complaints fall under the authority of TEA. If possible, resolve complaints between the parties. TEA has jurisdiction to investigate allegations of noncompliance regarding specific laws and rules generally related to state and federal requirements. Complaints may address educator preparation program requirements listed in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), ethics, fingerprinting, and certification.

Filing a Complaint

To file a complaint with TEA about an educator preparation program, please compile a complete submission using the following guidelines. There is no complaint form.

Write a letter with a brief narrative of the facts of the complaint. To adequately review and address a complaint, TEA needs specific details. TEA must be able to identify a clear violation of a school law or the Texas Administrative Code and determine whether the agency has authority to act upon the allegation.

Complaint submissions should include the following:

- The reasons you believe the issues raised in your complaint are valid. You also should indicate how you believe that TEA can assist you with this matter. Remember that TEA cannot assist you in understanding your contractual arrangement with the educator preparation program, arranging for a refund, obtaining a higher grade or credit for training, or seeking reinstatement to an educator preparation program.
- Documentation to support your narrative when possible. For example, if you refer in your complaint to an educator preparation program policy, include a copy of the policy with your complaint. Helpful documentation might include letters or e-mails exchanged between the parties.

Mail the letter and its attachments to:

Correspondence:
Management Communications Division
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress
Austin, TX 79701-1494

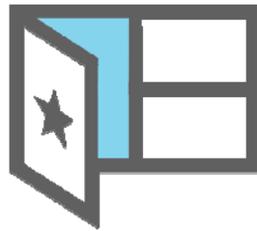
You also may fax your submission to 512.463-9008 or e-mail it to:
generalinquiry@tea.texas.gov.

Texas Education Agency staff will send confirmation of a complaint within 30 days of receiving the submission. Remember, information the public sends to TEA by e-mail may not be secure. Do not e-mail sensitive information to TEA. The agency will remove confidential or sensitive information when replying by e-mail. TEA will maintain confidentiality of information to the extent the law allows. Please note that TEA will not consider phone complaints or complaints that are submitted anonymously.

After the Complaint Is Filed

Correspondence and complaints are forwarded to the appropriate TEA office for review. TEA staff reviews the complaint to ensure that TEA has jurisdiction and authority to intervene or investigate the matter. TEA staff also determines whether the complaint demonstrates a possible violation of school law or the TAC. If the complaint is insufficient or if TEA does not have authority to address the complaint, the agency notifies the complainant no more than 30 days after receiving the submission.

If an investigation is warranted, TEA sends a written notice to each party. The notice provides parties an opportunity to submit additional information. After a preliminary review, TEA notifies parties involved of the disposition of the complaint.



INSPIRE TEXAS

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION BY REGION 4

Appendices

Appendix A: Financial Assistance

The following is a description of the different types of financial aid available to INSPIRE TEXAS candidates:

Texas Workforce Commission:

www.twc.state.tx.us

Troops to Teachers:

www.proudtoserveagain.com

Hinson-Hazelwood College Access Loan:

www.hhloans.com

Appendix B: Fees

For a current fee schedule, visit www.inspiretexas.net.

All fees are subject to change without notice.

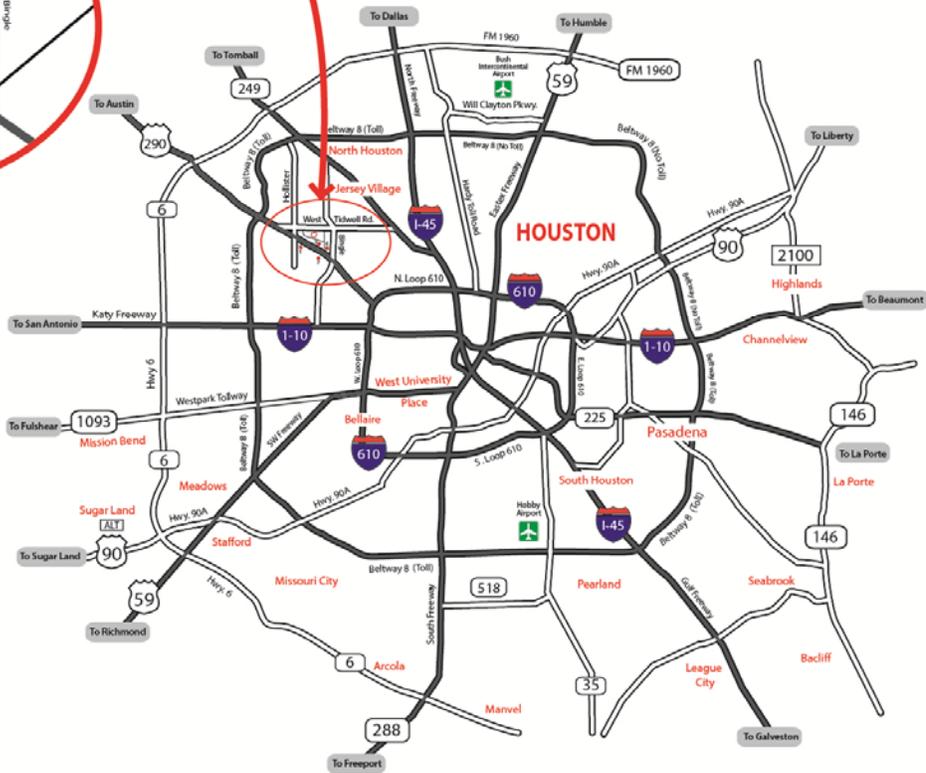
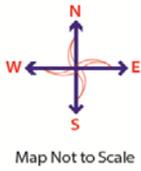
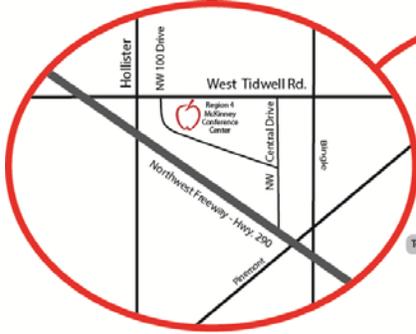
Appendix C: Directions to INSPIRE TEXAS | Educator Certification by Region 4

INSPIRE TEXAS | Educator Certification by Region 4 is located at 7145 West Tidwell Road, Houston, Texas 77092-2096.

From Loop 610: Take US 290 West (toward Austin); exit from US 290 at Hollister/West Tidwell. Turn right at first light (Hollister); turn right at next light (West Tidwell).

From Beltway 8: Exit Beltway 8 to US 290 East (toward downtown); exit from US 290 at West Tidwell/Hollister. Turn left at first light (West Tidwell).

Our switchboard attendants are available if you need further assistance with directions:
713.462.7708





Region 4 encompasses the school districts above; however, candidates are eligible to seek a teaching position at any public, state-supported charter, or accredited private school district in Texas.

Appendix D: Texas Administrative Code (Educator Code of Ethics)

Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

In compliance with the Texas Education Code §21.041(b)(8), the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) adopts an Educators' Code of Ethics as set forth in §247.2 of this title (relating to Code of Ethics and Standard Practices of Texas Educators). The SBEC may amend the ethics code in the same manner as any other formal rule.

I. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices and Performance.

- Standard 1.1. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.
- Standard 1.2. The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.
- Standard 1.3. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.
- Standard 1.4. The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.
- Standard 1.5. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.
- Standard 1.6. The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

- Standard 1.7. The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.
- Standard 1.8. The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.
- Standard 1.9. The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.
- Standard 1.10. The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.
- Standard 1.11. The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.
- Standard 1.12. The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.
- Standard 1.13. The educator shall not consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

II. Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues.

- Standard 2.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- Standard 2.2. The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.
- Standard 2.3. The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.
- Standard 2.4. The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

- Standard 2.5. The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.
- Standard 2.6. The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.
- Standard 2.7. The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

III. Ethical Conduct Toward Students.

- Standard 3.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.
- Standard 3.2. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.
- Standard 3.3. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.
- Standard 3.4. The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.
- Standard 3.5. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.
- Standard 3.6. The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.
- Standard 3.7. The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized

drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

- Standard 3.8. The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.
- Standard 3.9. The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, e-mail, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:
- (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
 - (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
 - (iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
 - (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
 - (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
 - (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Appendix E: Important Links and Useful Websites

Here are some important links you may find useful during your preservice training and practicum/clinical teaching experience:

ETS Testing

www.texas.ets.org

Testing Preparation Manuals and Study Guides

www.texas.ets.org

Texas Education Agency

www.tea.texas.gov

Job Listings

www.tasanet.org

www.esc4.net

Teacher Appraisal

http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Educator_Initiatives_and_Performance/Standards_for_Teacher_Appraisal/

Appendix F: Formal Process Grievance Form

Region 4 Education Service Center
INSPIRE TEXAS | Educator Certification by Region 4

Any participant who wishes to file a Level One or Level Two grievance must fill out this form completely. Grievance forms for Level One should be submitted to the Director of Educator Preparation Solutions; Level Two grievances should be submitted to the Deputy Executive Director of Support Services. All grievances will be processed in accordance with policies as stated in the *INSPIRE TEXAS | Educator Certification by Region 4 Handbook*.

Name: _____

Please check one: Level One Grievance (Director)
 Level Two Grievance (Deputy Executive Director)

Date of event or series of events causing the grievance:

Please state your grievance, including the individual harm alleged:

Please state specific facts of which you are aware to support your grievance (list in detail):

Please specify what remedy you are seeking:

If you are making complaints or charges against specific individuals, please identify each of those individuals by name:

If you will be represented in presenting your complaint, please identify the name, address, and telephone number of that individual or organization:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date Submitted: _____

Appendix G: Step-by-Step Process for the Teacher Program

- Step 1 Candidate submits application electronically to INSPIRE TEXAS.
- Step 2 Candidate submits all official transcripts to INSPIRE TEXAS at least 15 business days prior to the first day of training (bachelor's degree conferred or in last semester of bachelor's degree).
- Step 3 INSPIRE TEXAS staff reviews transcripts.
–If applying for bilingual or any foreign language and degree was received from an English-speaking country, candidate must be interviewed in that foreign language. With a degree from a university outside of the USA, English language proficiency will be determined; transcripts must be evaluated by an approved credential evaluation company and verified for authenticity (refer to website for details). All candidates must prove English proficiency.
- Step 4 If accepted, candidate receives an e-mail with further instructions including program registration and field experience. If denied, candidate receives an e-mail indicating what items must be completed for approval. Candidate may submit documentation for appeal.
- Step 5 Once accepted, candidate registers for training by accessing the candidate's INSPIRE TEXAS account.
- Step 6 INSPIRE TEXAS gives approval for the content exam during preservice training and the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT) exam if going through the program for bilingual education. Test registration instructions are sent to the candidate via e-mail at that time.
- Step 7 Candidate registers for the content exam at www.texas.ets.org; test is taken during preservice training.
- Step 8 Candidate completes preservice training.
- Step 9 Candidate completes 30 hours of field experience (arranged by contacting the human resources office in each school district). Instructions and forms are located in the candidate's INSPIRE TEXAS account.
- Step 10 Candidate applies for an internship at school districts. Candidate may choose to do clinical teaching (unpaid) instead of an internship; the clinical teaching application is in the candidate's INSPIRE TEXAS account and should be submitted by the appropriate deadline.
- Step 11 50 hours of professional development must be completed through the school district where employed or through INSPIRE TEXAS (for an additional fee) prior to recommendation for the standard Texas teacher certificate (at the end of the internship or clinical teaching assignment). The 50 clock hours may be

obtained by combining training obtained through the school district and INSPIRE TEXAS.

- Step 12 Once employment is obtained for an internship, candidate completes the statement of eligibility (SOE) form and the district submits the form to the INSPIRE TEXAS office (form is in the candidate's INSPIRE TEXAS account).
- Step 13 Candidate makes internship fee payment arrangements while completing the SOE. Internship fees are paid at regular intervals throughout the first eight months of the practicum. Payment of all fees is the responsibility of the candidate.
- Step 14 INSPIRE TEXAS e-mails instructions for applying for the probationary certificate after SOE is received.
- Step 15 Intern applies for the probationary certificate through www.tea.texas.gov and completes fingerprinting (required for district employment); INSPIRE TEXAS approves the certificate application.
- Step 16 INSPIRE TEXAS assigns a field supervisor to the candidate; the principal assigns a campus administrator and a mentor to the candidate.
- Step 17 The supervisor, campus administrator, and mentor meet with the candidate on campus.
- Step 18 INSPIRE TEXAS gives approval for the EC–12 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TExES exam once the candidate has completed the Beginning Teacher Seminar course.
- Step 19 Candidate registers for the EC–12 PPR TExES exam at www.texas.ets.org. This is taken during the first semester of the internship or the clinical teaching assignment.
- Step 20 Observations are conducted by the supervisor, campus administrator, and mentor throughout the 10-month internship or 12-week clinical teaching. If clinical teaching, no mentor is assigned; the cooperating teacher serves as classroom support.
- Step 21 Once the internship or clinical teaching is completed successfully, all required certification exams have been passed, all program training requirements are complete, and all fees have been paid, the candidate applies for the standard Texas teacher certificate at the TEA website (www.tea.texas.gov). All fees must be paid in full in order for the candidate to be approved for the standard Texas teacher certificate.
- Step 22 INSPIRE TEXAS recommends the standard Texas teacher certificate, and TEA issues the certificate.
- Step 23 At this point, the candidate is a fully certified teacher in Texas.

FERPA Consent to Release Education Records and Information

This release represents your consent to permit INSPIRE TEXAS | Educator Certification by Region 4 to disclose education records and any information contained therein to the specific individual(s) identified below. By agreeing that I have read this entire handbook, I hereby give my agreement to the following:

I am a candidate at INSPIRE TEXAS and hereby give my voluntary consent to officials:

To disclose the following records relating to:

- My field-based observations
- My performance in the field
- My eligibility to apply for a probationary certificate

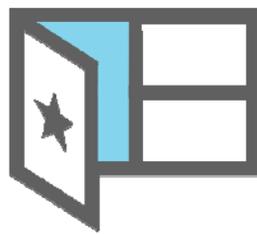
To the following person(s):

- School districts or other agencies associated with field-based observations
- School/agency-based administrators/mentors
- Program faculty

These records are being released for the purposes of:

- Conversing and reviewing performance
- Acquiring feedback
- Procuring required signatures

I understand that under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (“FERPA” 20 USC §1232g; 34 CFR §99; commonly known as the “Buckley Amendment”), no disclosure of my records can be made without my consent unless otherwise provided for in legal statutes and judicial decisions. I also understand that I may revoke this consent at any time (via written request to INSPIRE TEXAS | Educator Certification by Region 4) except to the extent that action has already been taken upon this release. Further, without such a release, I am unable to participate in the program.



INSPIRE TEXAS

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION BY REGION 4

Thank you for choosing INSPIRE TEXAS!