4.2.1. Indicators of Teacher Effectiveness.

Evidence and Analysis of Completers Teaching Effectiveness for Continuous Improvement:

The EPP evaluates the impact of teacher effectiveness and how completers effectively apply professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions that their preparation experiences were designed to achieve through the Summary of Data Collected from Public School Partners in a qualitative research study for the A&M System Colleges of Education; the integration of our Shared Vision/Conceptual Framework with interactions of the College of Education and Social Sciences (COESS) Advisory Council Meetings; Texas Education Agency (TEA) state surveys of WTAMU Certification Graduates and Survey of Supervising Principals of First Year Teachers; and Education Preparation Program (EPP) Advisory Council Meetings. Additionally, the EPP reviewed Region 16 ESC’s Regional Finalists for Teacher of the Year from 2013 to 2016 and the 2015 National Teacher of the Year, our alumna Ms. Shanna Peeples.

These data show that our in-service graduates are effective teachers and have positive impacts on P-12 student learning and development.

Summary of Data Collected from Public School District Partners.

As reported in 2.1.3, the Deans of The Texas A&M University System Colleges of Education conducted a meaningful qualitative research project. The research effort was designed to collect and analyze data from our public and private school partners regarding: (1) their perceptions of the strengths of our education workforce graduates, (2) their recommendations for areas in which the preparation and performance of our graduates could be enhanced, (3) their identification of the challenges facing their districts and institutions, and (4) the joint identification of opportunities for our Universities to partner with them in achieving their goals. Excerpts from this report summarize the data collected in regard to teacher effectiveness by West Texas A&M University in the Education Service Center Region 16 during spring 2015.

This research initiative advances the strategic missions of our regional universities and our System and facilitates the continuous improvement of our education workforce preparation programs. Importantly, the data generated by this IMPACT (“Increasing Maximum Performance of A&M System Certified Teachers”) study and our institutional and collective responses to the study clearly connect in a meaningful way the education workforce preparation curricula to the expectations and needs of our public and private school partners.

In the spring of 2015, as a result of the interaction between WTAMU and our partnering LEAs, the administration (superintendent, principals, and human resource directors) of the 62 school districts in Region 16 were invited to attend a focus group meeting in their immediate geographic areas. The purpose of the focus group initiative was to solicit their input on the research questions previously stated. As a result of this interaction and based upon the input of our partners, a number of enhancements to our educator preparation program were implemented.
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The purpose of each focus group was to update our public school partners on recent enhancements to our teacher preparation program that are designed to better prepare future educators to meet the challenges and opportunities of the increasingly diverse school population and to solicit the input and recommendations of the districts on the following topics: (Note: This evidence will focus upon the respondents interactions to questions (1) and (2) of the research study).

1. What are the strengths of teachers and the education workforce (school leaders, counselors, diagnosticians) prepared by WTAMU?

2. What are areas where WTAMU can enhance the preparation of teachers and the education workforce?

Thirty-two school districts were represented at the focus group meetings; most districts were represented by more than one administrator (for example, 22 administrators from Amarillo ISD and 14 from Canyon ISD participated). Each meeting was tape-recorded. Subsequent meetings were conducted with WTAMU Department of Education faculty and staff during the fall 2015 semester to fully discuss and evaluate the input received from the school districts.

The following summarizes the input received from school district partners:

Discussion Topic 1: What are the strengths of teachers and the education workforce prepared by WTAMU?

The districts were unanimously positive in their assessment of the strengths of the WTAMU education workforce and our preparation programs. Participants expressed that WTAMU graduates are generally well prepared in all areas. Districts reported that WTAMU graduates are well prepared in the content areas and were not aware of content knowledge deficiencies.

Specific comments included the following:

*Program Requirements.* The districts are very supportive of our policy change requiring that students pass their state-mandated competency exams (Content and PPR Exams) before student teaching. This has significantly enhanced their ability to employ outstanding candidates. Districts report that WTAMU candidates are much more marketable than candidates in other preparation programs who have not passed exams before student teaching. WTAMU discussed our remediation strategies to improve the performance of students not successful on state-mandated exams.

Districts report that the current candidate pool is stronger than in the past (the new requirement that students have passed exams is credited for this improvement). WTAMU candidates are well prepared for interviews, are professionally dressed, and interact in an appropriate and professional manner.
4.2.1. Indicators of Teacher Effectiveness.

**Educator Expo.** Districts discussed the value of the pre-Educator Expo reception for Districts and student teachers. Districts appreciate the opportunity to meet with candidates prior to the Expo.

Districts frequently noted that WTAMU is the primary provider of education workforce professionals in Region 16 and that our collaborative partnerships are critical to their success. Districts unanimously commented on the outstanding quality of our alternative certification candidates as compared to many alternative certification programs and recognize that our program is a graduate degree program in education and not simply a “test-preparation” program.

Discussion Topic 2: What are areas where WTAMU can enhance the preparation of teachers and the education workforce?

**Small, Rural District Concerns.** Input was received from all smaller, rural districts requesting additional opportunities to interact with candidates, particularly in connection with clinical teaching. Small districts feel if they could have increased opportunities to interact with our candidates, they could interact/interest a larger number of candidates to their districts (whereas currently the majority of our graduates seek placement in Amarillo ISD and Canyon ISD).

**Strategies Discussed.** Through collaboration between smaller districts and WTAMU, a program will be developed and implemented whereby WTAMU candidates are transported to near-by small districts for an organized program to acquaint the students with the advantages of teaching in smaller district/communities.

**Classroom Management.** Districts report that classroom management is consistently (regardless of preparation program) an area needing additional preparation for first year teachers.

**Strategies Discussed.** Align content in classroom management curriculum with the behavior management strategies emphasized in district “first-year teacher academies.” WTAMU will conduct a survey of Region 16 districts to determine what strategies/behavior management programs are currently adopted by districts.

It was reported that one university identifies on the student’s transcript the specific behavior management training programs (e.g., Fred Jones) that the student has successfully completed as part of their preparation program.

**Mechanics of Teaching.** Many districts expressed the desire that WTAMU students experience the beginning days of the school year in the public school classroom to better understand the mechanics of establishing a classroom and establishing initial relationships with learners including the introduction of a behavior management plan.
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It was emphasized that candidates should be better prepared to manage the rigors and stress of the teaching profession and develop skills necessary to manage time, adjust to change, manage professional relationships including conflict resolution with parents, etc.

 Strategies Discussed. In the Fall of 2016, all Methods and student/clinical teachers will participate in the “August Experience” prior to the academic school year. The EPP will invite successful former first-year teachers to interact and mentor/coach pre-service teachers specifically regarding the stresses associated with the initial teaching year.

 Technology-based Teaching. Districts consistently reported that preservice and in-service teachers need more in-depth knowledge and skills related to the effective use of technology to accomplish learning outcomes. How to employ technology to advance knowledge, solve problems, develop critical thinking, etc. Districts expressed a need for training to incorporate technology with project-based learning.

 Strategies Discussed. WTAMU will conduct a technology assessment to determine what hardware and software is available and used by districts in Region 16. WTAMU will collaborate with districts to more fully identify the needs of the districts in this area. WTAMU will modify an existing faculty vacancy in Instruction Design and Technology to recruit a faculty member who will collaborate with districts on an ongoing basis and develop curriculum to address the needs for the use of technology to accomplish higher-order thinking.

 Other Discussion Items. Many district participants asked when WTAMU will offer a doctoral degree in education (Ed.D) and expressed a strong interest in pursuing the degree.

WTAMU is currently writing a proposal with A&M International for an Ed.D. that will be submitted to the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Impact of EPP Efforts

The WTAMU College of Education and Social Sciences (COESS) Advisory Council Meeting held on April 8, 2015 reported on Spring 2015 Enrollment and School Production (SCH) and surveys regarding the preparation of our graduates who are now teaching. In the Department of Education:

• The Count was 1,137 enrolled at 13%.
• SCH Production was 8,554 at 9% SCH.
• The revised College of Education and Social Sciences (COESS) Mission Statement declares:

The College of Education and Social Sciences at West Texas A&M University is a diverse and inclusive student-centered community of learners. The College is dedicated to the development of tomorrow’s leaders through technology-rich, academically rigorous educational programs and empowering co-curricular
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experiences at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The College is dedicated to the preparation of education and social science professionals who excel academically, are reflective in practice, demonstrate a global perspective and are committed to ethical behavior. The College serves as a catalyst for the economic development and the enhancement of the quality of life of the region through education, research and consultation.

The College excels in the preparation of the education workforce through its accredited educator preparation and professional certification programs.

- The Texas Education Agency (TEA) Survey of WTAMU Certification Candidates (2013-2014): Over 90% of graduates responded that they were “sufficiently” or “well-prepared” in all assessed areas: Classroom Environment, Instruction, Students with Disabilities, ELL, Technology Integration and Data Analysis.
- The TEA Survey of Principals Supervising WTAMU Beginning Teachers (2012-2013): Mean score exceeds “sufficiently” prepared in all assessed areas: Classroom Environment, Instruction, Students with Disabilities, ELL, Technology Integration and Data Analysis.
- 87% of Alternative Teacher Certification Candidates (PACE) eligible for employment (2013-2014) were employed in public school classrooms.
- The COESS Advisory Council discussed the effectiveness of our in-service teachers (graduates) in the areas of planning and preparation, instruction, classroom environment, P-12 students with disabilities, English language learners, and technology integration and data analysis.

Items for discussion with the Advisory Council included the following topics:

- **Planning and preparation** for teachers includes broad content knowledge; **instruction** for teachers is inclusive of content, pedagogical, and technological knowledge; teachers creating **classroom environments** conducive to learning includes pedagogical knowledge and skill for organizational, management, social, and emotional supports; teachers impacting **students with disabilities** and **English language learners** is gaining even greater predominance in student populations in Texas.
- Advisory Council members commented upon the positive impacts instilling **Ethical and Professional Dispositions of Candidates** during their preparation has had on their new teachers in the areas of **professional responsibilities**. Members are beginning to see a difference in our graduates because of our emphasis on ethical behaviors, professional dispositions, and the **Texas Code of Ethics for Educators**.
- The Advisory Council discussed the positive impact of the new **COESS Mission Statement** upon teacher preparation and teacher production.
- Anecdotal evidence from the Advisory Council school representatives and their discussions indicate the “satisfactory” and “more than satisfactory” teacher effectiveness in their schools and the positive impacts of our graduates on their P-12 students.
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Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Annual Meeting.

The minutes of the EPP Annual Meeting held on November 19, 2015 with representatives from LEAs, Region 16, and WTAMU include the following comments regarding teacher effectiveness and impacts upon P-12 student learning and development:

- Mr. Gilbert Antunez (Assistant Director of PACE) refers to the LBB report that indicates our completers who have received their state certifications and are qualified for employment.
- Mr. Buddy Fox (Director of Teacher Preparation and Advising) explained our exit tracking system so that we can recommend appropriate candidates to the school districts as new teachers.
- Anecdotally, many of the LEA personnel present commented upon the high quality of our graduates, their teaching effectiveness as being equal (and sometimes superior) to many of their veteran teachers on campus, and the positive impacts our graduates are having on their students.
- Ms. Sheri Blankenship (Assistant Superintendent of Hereford ISD) asked what is the justification of the state passing the 5-attempt rule to pass state certification exams? Ms. Blankenship asked, “What is the relationship between passing the exam and being a good teacher?” She states that sometimes the test is restrictive because of the inherent language barrier.
- Mr. Travis Longanecker (Region 16 ESC) states that by raising the bar, the teaching profession gets more respect even if the passing rates are currently lower.
- Mr. Keith Brown (Opportunity Plan, Inc.) states that he commends all of the instructor educators because the Legislature in Austin puts unreasonable demands on education.

2015-2016 Program Information/Application/Curriculum Updates.

Mr. Buddy Fox provided an update from the Office of Teacher Preparation and Field Experiences (also previously known as the Office of Teacher Preparation and Advising).

- Student teachers will now be referred to as clinical teachers.
- The requirements for students to pass all tests prior to clinical teaching ensures highly qualified candidates for employment in school districts. Dr. Henderson (Dean) posed the question to school district representatives whether this practice is beneficial. All agreed; however, Mr. Tatum (Amarillo ISD) said the only disadvantage was in the reduced number of clinical teachers.
- Ms. Blankenship (Hereford ISD) and Ms. Volmer (Canyon ISD) stated that their districts are very short of substitute teachers and asked if WTAMU can refer students who do not pass the test to substitute teach. This will allow the students to gain classroom experience as they prepare and retake the exams. Mr. Chapman (Field Supervisor) also suggested that they could act as tutors during the interim between tests, which would give them additional experience and content
4.2.1. Indicators of Teacher Effectiveness.

preparation. Mr. Fox and Dr. Henderson agreed that these were good ideas to implement with our candidates.

Ms. Allen presented PACE program updates including intern demographic/distribution data.

- Most PACE applicants are WTAMU graduates (77%), and many are employed in Region 16 schools (81%). Ms. Allen expressed appreciation for the support Region 16 ESC and schools provide our programs.
- The PACE and post-baccalaureate programs are combined, so all alternative certification candidates through WTAMU are in the PACE program. This eliminates some confusion with candidates, in-service teachers, and the school districts.
- The Texas State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) is looking closely at admission policies as listed in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227, so PACE applicants must take the content exam prior to application; if they do not have the required content course work, they will not be admitted to begin program course work unless they pass.

Program Accountability.

Mr. Antunez presented the Accountability System for Educator Preparation, or ASEP report showing the results of program completers on certification exams, Standard 1 of ASEP. With a combined pass rate of 99.3% (all test takers/all tests), WT’s educator preparation programs are rated “accredited” under Texas Education Agency’s (TEA’s) ASEP system. He also presented the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) report that reports the percentage of traditional undergraduate candidates who completed certification within one year following graduation. The 2015 LBB report confirms 84.1% certified, an increase over the 2014 LBB rate of 65.9%, demonstrating that efforts of the undergraduate program to encourage students to test and complete certification application are successful.

Mr. Longanecker (Region 16 ESC) complimented our programs on the pass rate and said it needed to be communicated to the public. Other members agreed.

Additional Comments and Questions.

Members provided general comments:

- Ms. Cotton, a clinical teacher, supported the new requirements of passing both exams prior to clinical teaching. She said she was confident and felt well prepared to enter the classroom. Mr. Chapman, Ms. Cotton’s supervisor, also supported the changes and said this year’s clinical teachers were better prepared to enter the classroom than any other group he has worked with.
- Mr. Guillen, an intern, stated he had learned a great deal of patience this year. Mr. McCord, his supervisor, said it was evidence that Mr. Guillen was ready to
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enter the classroom, and the new changes made supervision easier because candidates as teachers are well prepared.

- Ms. Blankenship (Hereford ISD) expressed her appreciation for the opportunity in these meetings, and that she values the relationship WT has with school districts.
- Mr. Tatum (Amarillo ISD) echoed Ms. Blankenship’s remarks and said they valued the excellent working relationship with WT. He stated that we do our best to meet the staffing needs of the districts and not all programs cooperate in this way.

Closing Remarks.

Dr. Henderson (Dean) thanked the districts for providing field-experience placements for our candidates and for hiring our candidates. He also encouraged members to contact us at any time if they had concerns or suggestions. Dr. Henderson concluded the meeting.

Region 16 Education Service Center’s Regional Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year and the 2015 National Teacher of the Year, Ms. Shanna Peeples.

For the EPP, there is no greater indicator of a teacher’s effectiveness than to be nominated by fellow colleagues that include teachers, administrators, students, and parents as a campus and district’s Teacher of the Year. In review of Region 16 ESC’s regional finalists from 2013 to 2016, the evidence revealed that many of our former candidates who are now teachers rose through the rigorous competition to become not only regional finalists as Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year, but also as the Texas Secondary Teacher of the Year, and, ultimately, the 2015 National Teacher of the Year!

From 2013 to 2016, our EPP had nine out of 25 elementary Teacher of the Year regional finalists, with one teacher being awarded the Regional Elementary Teacher of the Year in 2013, and three out of 29 secondary Teacher of the Year regional finalists, with one special teacher being awarded the Regional, State, and then National Teacher of the Year in 2015.

We are extremely proud that a current example of one of our high quality and effective graduates is Ms. Shanna Peeples, the 2015 National Teacher of the Year. As an alumna of our teacher education program at West Texas A&M University, Shanna continues to inspire not only her own students and colleagues, but also the nation and the nation’s teachers through her commitment to ensuring the highest quality education for all P-12 students.

Analysis of Evidence and Implications for Continuous Improvement (continued):

The EPP’s analysis and evaluation of the impact of teacher effectiveness and how completers effectively apply professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions that their preparation experiences were designed to achieve are derived from multiple evidence
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sources including primarily the Texas A&M (TAMU) System Deans of Colleges of Education Focus Group Research Study; Texas Education Agency (TEA) surveys of certification graduates (completers) and supervising principals of beginning teachers; and the College of Education and Social Sciences (COESS) and Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Advisory Council Meetings, and most importantly, the regional finalists as Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year and the 2015 National Teacher of the Year.

As represented by these amazing educators and aligned with the new COESS mission statement, the EPP is dedicated to the preparation of the education professional workforce as:

“The College is dedicated to the preparation of education . . . professionals who excel academically, are reflective in practice, demonstrate a global perspective and are committed to ethical behavior. The College serves as a catalyst for the economic development and the enhancement of the quality of life of the region through education, research and consultation.”

Through qualitative and anecdotal evidence, these data show that our in-service graduates are effective teachers who have positive impacts on P-12 student learning and development.

Multiple Evidence Sources:

- [See 1.1.1k. Shared Vision or Conceptual Framework of the EPP].
- [See 1.1.8f. Principal Survey (In-Service), (Content)].
- [See 2.1.2d. Education Preparation Program (EPP) Advisory Council Meetings, 2013].
- [See 2.1.2e. Education Preparation Program (EPP) Advisory Council Meetings, 2014].
- [See 2.1.2f. Education Preparation Program (EPP) Advisory Council Meetings, 2015].
- [See 2.1.3. Dean, Leadership, and Superintendent Focus Groups].
- [See 2.1.6. Completer Follow-Up Survey].
- [See 4.1.1. Impact on P-12 Student Learning and Development].
- [See 4.3.1. Satisfaction of Employers].
- [See 5.5.1. Stakeholders and Program Evaluation, Improvement, and Identification of Models of Excellence].