

# Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE)




Candace M. Ferguson  
21st CCLC State Coordinator/  
Program Manager


## Dear Texas ACE Colleagues,

Incredibly, another school year has flown by, and as we reflect, we realize how much we have accomplished. I had the opportunity to witness first-hand during several site visits, the achievements you and your staff have made this year. And while we can celebrate our achievements, we want to continue focusing on aligning our efforts with the Federal 21st

CCLC standards as we make significant strides toward having all Texas students graduate prepared for college and/or the workforce.

To ensure these standards are met, we have reviewed both the federal and state 21st CCLC requirements and formalized a grantee assessment process using  a Blueprint for Afterschool as the foundation. We recently piloted the new PRIME Assessment process with six grantees—three representing Cycle 5 and three representing Cycle 6. The participating grantees provided feedback regarding the process, which Texas Education Agency (TEA) reviewed with Edvance Research, our Quality Assurance Provider, and the Technical Assistance Consultants (TACs) to determine what modifications were needed. The lessons learned during the pilot process provided critical information that will help us successfully roll out the PRIME Assessment process later this fall. In preparation

for implementing this process, we will provide training to Project Directors during the annual Texas ACE Conference in August.

This month we are also launching the enhanced  TX21st system. TEA staff and several others have spent the last several months identifying ways to improve the usability of the data system. Communication Network members reviewed and provided feedback on the proposed enhancements which include:

- **Menu changes**
- **New functionality—specifically the ability to track daily attendance**
- **Tracking for regular vs. non-regular students**

Training on these enhancements is available through “Showme” tutorials on the TX21st System.

There will be additional discussions on both of these topics at the 2010 ACE Conference. I am excited about this year’s conference program as it will offer you a forum to learn, share, and explore new ideas on how we, as the Texas ACE Program, can *Achieve Critical Success*.

Thank you for all the efforts you have made to create a valued and effective program for your students, families, and community.

Sincerely,  
Candace M. Ferguson  
21st CCLC State Coordinator/Program Manager

# Spotlight on ACE Family Involvement—Vidor ACE

**Family and Parental Support Services** is one of the four components in the Four-Component Activity Guide that is a pillar of successful ACE programs. ACE centers are providing services and activities that not only support and help increase parental involvement in their student's educational experience they also offer families ongoing educational programs such as GED classes, courses to improve financial literacy, and language lessons.

Vidor ISD's ACE program provides an excellent example of integrating the family into the ACE program. Recently awarded the Bright Idea award at the Texas Community Education Association's annual conference, Vidor has implemented a "Terrific Tuesday" family night, hosted the first Tuesday of each month. The program offers a variety of activities to encourage active participation in the program.

At a recent Terrific Tuesday event, students and their families participated in Science Night. Members of the community and school teachers offered a hands-on presentation about regional animals, demonstrated air pressure through audience participation, and explored stars and constellations in a "Star Lab". The "Terrific Tuesday" family night series has been a success with **average attendance at 300 participants per event!**

To create engaging, ongoing family and parental involvement activities, Sally Andrews, Vidor ISD Project Director, offers insights and ideas for successfully implementing a wide range of Family Activities:

## ***Terrific Tuesday Family Nights***

- Provide a variety of activities and events that focus on education, community service, financial planning, community awareness, etc.
- Offer an engaging program by featuring students' work, parent presentation, hands-on community activities.
- Discuss a parent tip (i.e. TAKS testing tips, concert etiquette, family nights at home).
- Meet for one hour or less, on the same night every month.

## ***Tips for Family Event Outreach***

- Send flyers home with students.
- Promote program in local newspaper and school newsletters.
- Use the school's parent notification system.

## ***Build a "Parent Center" at each ACE campus***

- Ensure that Parent Centers are open at convenient hours for families, and during regular ACE hours.
- Offer a wide variety of educational materials designed to facilitate involvement for families (i.e. informational pamphlets, TAKS testing materials, games, accelerated reading books, or grade appropriate study materials).



## ***Tips for Positive Parent Communication***

- Start with a smile and a positive statement.
- Ensure all staff are professional, even if frustrated.
- Create a welcoming environment.

## **Remember, YOU make your program. Make it a positive one!**

By offering a variety of activities including educational-based, GED preparation, and family literacy sessions, Vidor ACE has had success with creating an enduring, engaging "Terrific Tuesday" Family Night series.

Learn more about involving families in your ACE program by participating in the upcoming webinar series, "*Promising Practices that Encourage Family Participation*." Watch your inbox for registration information for our first two webinars:

**June—Camille McCoy from Mathis**

**July—Sally Andrews from Vidor**

Have a family program you would like to be featured? Please send us a note detailing your family and parental support program to [TexasACE21@edvanceresearch.com](mailto:TexasACE21@edvanceresearch.com).

## **Texas ACE 2010 Annual Conference** *Achieving Critical Success*

- August 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- Renaissance Austin Hotel at the Arboretum
- 4 Participants per grantee

For more information, visit [TexasACE21.org](http://TexasACE21.org)

# Engaging the Local Community through Creativity and Tenacity

There are various strategies for engaging your community and building awareness for your ACE program. One way to reach a large audience is by using the local media—television, newspaper, and radio.

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“There are so many potential hurdles you might encounter as you try to have your program featured on a large scale. To overcome these hurdles, I have encouraged our staff to follow these simple guidelines.”

—Miguel Garcia, Jr., Director, Fort Worth Afterschool

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**Miguel Garcia, Jr., Director at Fort Worth Afterschool**, has had success with using local media and shared his approach during a recent interview.

1. Identify an activity or event that differentiates your program from all other programs and describe how or why it benefits the community.
2. Confirm that the selected activity accurately represents what you have outlined to the media.
3. Determine if there is an internal review and/or approval process for media related communications and follow the process.
4. Provide evidence of how this activity has benefited the students during the internal review and approval process.
5. Prepare yourself before you meet with key influencers or decision-makers.
6. Be persistent and follow through when an opportunity arises.
7. Ensure current program information is accessible on website and in outreach materials.
8. Celebrate featured stories, don't dwell on those that weren't selected.

Fort Worth Afterschool has been featured **five times** in the “**After the Bell**” series on WFAA, Channel 8 in Fort Worth.

Earlier this month, Garcia launched a Speaker's Bureau with three of his staff. The goal of this project is to generate additional buzz for ACE by reaching out to non-profit organizations such as the Optimist and Rotary Clubs. In addition, continued focus will be placed on strengthening the relationship with local and elected officials, who currently receive copies of the Program's newsletter, *Fort Worth Afterschool News*.

If you have strategies to share on engaging the community, please go to the ACE Community Discussion Board at [MyTexasACE.org](http://MyTexasACE.org).

## Save the Dates!

### ACE 2010 Annual Conference

Austin, TX

August 3 – 4, 2010

More information at [TexasAce21.org](http://TexasAce21.org)

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## Questions?

Send your inquiries to [TexasACE21@edvanceresearch.com](mailto:TexasACE21@edvanceresearch.com)

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## TEA Leadership

**Lizzette Reynolds**—Deputy Commissioner

**Barbara Knaggs**—Associate Commissioner

**Gina Day**—Deputy Associate Commissioner

**Lilie Elizondo-Limas**—Director

**Candace M. Ferguson**—State Coordinator/Program Manager

**Liza Lorenzi**—Program Specialist

**James Connolly**—Grant Manager

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## Edvance Research Leadership

**Kristin Nafziger**—Project Director

**Brian Brothers**—Project Manager



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Afterschool Centers on Education

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# ACE Communication Network ... working for you

## ToP® Facilitation Methods being used across the state by Texas ACE Grant Leaders

TEA recently provided the opportunity for Cycle 5 and 6 ACE Grant Leaders to attend the **Technology of Participation (ToP®) Facilitation Methods** two-day course. Grant leaders learned about three specific facilitation methods during the training:

- Focused Conversation
- The Consensus Workshop
- The Action Planning Method

In April 2010, a follow-up survey was sent to Grant Leaders who attended the ToP Facilitation Methods course. Although the training sessions were just completed in March 2010, **88% of survey respondents reported having already used the Focused Conversation Method**. 56% reported using the Consensus Workshop Method and 25% had already used the Action Planning Method.

The Harris County Department of Education's Cooperative for After-School Enrichment (CASE) is utilizing the ToP Facilitation Methods in a variety of ways. During recent Texas ACE continuation application planning sessions, CASE staff used the *Focused Conversation* method as a way to debrief at the end of each meeting. CASE has also utilized the *Consensus Workshop* method with groups of high school students focused on identifying the elements of a quality afterschool program.

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**“Using the Top Facilitation Methods helps us stay focused on the topic being discussed, and also allows us to value everyone’s contributions in a non-judgmental way.”**

—Stacey Crawford, *Assistant Director, Programs & Administration, CASE.*

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“ToP” is a registered trademark of the Institute of Cultural Affairs in the U.S.A.

The **Communication Network (CN)** was created to develop a system of communication that brings representative grantees from across Texas together to collaborate, network, and enhance the consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness of ACE programs.

The 30-member group includes grantees, TEA representatives, Technical Assistance Consultants (TACs), and Program Quality Assurance representatives. The CN meets quarterly, and during the past two years has focused on the facilitation of communication across the ACE network to ensure your voice is heard.

See what Communication Network members have to say about the role of the CN:

**Frances Ehrlich**, Program Director at Karnes City ISD (New member)

**“TEA values what members have to say. They want to hear about what is going on regionally at the center level, so they can assist us in making Texas ACE better.”**

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**Shirlene Justice**, Project Administrator at Austin ISD (5-year member)

**“I have seen the CN evolve from a group of handpicked leaders to a group that really represents the broad array of grantees across the state including members who represent the various positions. We have become a close group and are able to offer support to each other when needed.”**

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**John Perry**, Technical Assistance Consultant for Dallas/Fort Worth Region (New member)

**“We are the eyes and ears for the Texas 21st CCLC Program. I am a liaison between TEA and the regional ACE grantees, sharing ideas, concerns, and updates to both TEA and my region. When a grantee expresses a problem or a concern to me, I can address it more efficiently as I can reach out to others across the state who have experienced the same issues.”**

**Recruiting new members**—Learn more by visiting [TexasACE21.org](http://TexasACE21.org).