



Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers

ACE PRIME Assessment: Site Visit Process

October 2011

Contents

- Purpose of ACE PRIME Assessment.....1**
- Components of the Assessment Process.....1**
 - Pre-Visit Activities1*
 - Site Visit Activities4*
 - Site Visit Code of Conduct.....4**
 - Site Visit Schedule5**
 - Sample Interview Questions5**
 - Post-Visit Activities.....8*
- Appendix A. PRIME: A Blueprint for Afterschool9**
- Appendix B. Critical Success Model10**
 - Critical Success Factors10*
 - Milestones10*

Purpose of ACE PRIME Assessment

The purpose of the Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) PRIME assessment annual technical assistance site visit process for Texas 21st Century Learning Centers grantees is to provide the Texas Education Agency (TEA) with a status of each grantee's implementation of their grant according to their respective application, federal and state requirements, and research-based practices. Additional purposes are to:

- develop a technical assistance plan for each grantee;
- provide baseline information for future Program Implementation Assurance (PIA) evaluations; and
- identify exemplary practices and the use of effective, research based strategies implemented by ACE grantees.

Each grantee's ACE PRIME Assessment site visit will be led by the assigned Technical Assistance Consultant (TAC) and will include:

- a desk review of the grantee's approved grant application along with any amendments and reports in TX21st data system, and
- a site visit which encompasses a review of the requirements included as part of the ACE PRIME Blueprint (Appendix A) and the ACE Critical Success Model (Appendix B) as applicable to the specific requirements for each grant cycle.

All grantees must complete all required site visit activities and use the results to modify their programs as needed. Grantees that have not fully implemented the requirements of their grant may be subject to the reduction or loss of funding, as determined by TEA.

Components of the Assessment Process

The ACE PRIME Assessment process consists of pre-visit, on-site visit, and post-visit activities. The on-site visit will be conducted by each grantee's assigned TAC and the order in which site visits will occur will be determined by the TAC, in consultation with TEA and Edvance Research, Inc. (Edvance).

Pre-Visit Activities

The project director listed in TX21st will be the point of contact for all site visit activities. Once a grantee has been selected for a site visit, the project director will receive an email notification from his or her TAC. Upon notification, the project director must work with the TAC to schedule the site visit within 30 calendar days. It is a requirement of the grant to maintain current contact information in TX21st and failure to do so will not constitute an acceptable reason to delay the site visit process.

Each grantee will complete the ACE PRIME Assessment form self-assessment portion prior to the site visit. The ACE PRIME Assessment form will be included in the email notification from the TAC and is available on MyTexasACE.org under Implement the Grant. Please see the ACE PRIME Assessment form for additional instructions for self-assessment and rating.

Also, prior to the site visit the grantee must prepare two (2) identical tabbed three-ring binders which will each contain the required documentation outlined in the table below. One copy of the binder is your information and one will be for your TAC to review. For ease of reference, try to include the documents in the same order as they are listed in the table, please use additional sub-tabs or colored paper to distinguish between the documents. Please be advised that information in the binder, samples, etc. should not include any confidential student or staff information. One copy of the binder and a copy of your grantee self-assessment should be provided to the TAC when they arrive for the site visit.

Please note that the ACE PRIME Assessment form includes a list of other supporting documentation, in addition to the required documentation below, that is needed to substantiate the grantee’s ratings. Therefore, grantees should also include in their binders the recommended documentation to substantiate their ratings. This additional documentation should be placed in the binder behind the required documentation within each tab. Some of the required or supporting documentation may be in-progress or not yet due to TEA. In these cases, please provide an update on your progress and copies of works in progress.

Finally, please note that the descriptions used in the lists of required and supporting documentation are general and descriptive in nature. Your program may have similar documents or call them something else. You do not need to rename or recreate your documents to match the descriptions in the ACE PRIME Assessment, please be prepared to explain how the documentation you provided meets the requirements and substantiates your ratings.

Required Documentation	Category	Page #
TAB A: Planning the Program		
Campus needs assessment for each campus served by a ACE Program	Program – 1	2
Annual Operation Plan	Quality Assurance – 9A	14
Center Service Delivery Plan (CSDP) for each center with 4 components addressed at each center	Quality Assurance – 9B	15
Center program schedule and activity locations (include staff or volunteers assigned to deliver activity) (Include one schedule for each center)	Quality Assurance – 9B	15
Activity Plans (Using ACE Activity and Lesson Templates, or equivalent)	Quality Assurance – 9B	15
Program and Center Budgets	Fiscal – 7	12
Documentation of other grant resources (include evidence of match for Cycle 5) i.e., Schedule #4A—	Fiscal – 7 & Quality Assurance	16

Required Documentation	Category	Page #
Program Abstract: Part 2: 21st CCLC Program Funding, center budget, resource allocation chart	Fiscal – 7	
Timesheet and Time & Effort Log Samples (Approx. 5-10 samples of timesheets and logs to help describe process and outcome of documenting staff time. Names and other personal information should be blacked out.)	Fiscal – 7	12
Financial reports for Project Director review (i.e., sample T&E logs, end of month grant expenditures)	Fiscal – 7	12
TAB B: Resourcing the Program		
Table of Contents from Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Texas ACE program	Program – 5A	9
Documentation of center meetings with program teachers, parents, and students (meeting dates, attendance lists, agenda, minutes); ideally this process would be documented in the program’s Policy and Procedures Handbook, maybe under internal quality monitoring or similar.	Program – 5A	9
Roster of Community Task Force Members and their affiliations	Program – 2A	3
Cycle 7 Grantees – Verification of community involvement based on approved NOGA	Program – 2A	3
Partner and significant sub-contractor agreements (please include any that are not included in grant or continuation application)	Program – 3A	5
Documentation aligning afterschool program with school-day instruction (needs assessment, school principal-site coordinator meetings-dates, attendance lists, agenda, minutes, evidence of access to school-day curriculum/lesson plans)	Program – 3A	5
Documentation of school and community involvement (correspondence, outreach materials posted and distributed, participation in meetings in the community-dates, attendance lists, agenda, minutes)	Program – 2B	4
TAB C: Implementing the Program		
Documentation of training and attendance	Program – 5B	10
Job Descriptions (Include Project Director and Site Coordinator at minimum)	Program – 5B	10
Representative samples of attendance record-keeping ensuring that all confidential student information is hidden (TAC will access Activity enrollment and attendance records via TX21st)	Program – 3C	7
TAB D: Maintaining Program Quality		
Documented Internal Grantee monitoring process	Quality Assurance – 8	13

Required Documentation	Category	Page #
Documentation of grantee compliance visits to centers	Quality Assurance – 8	13
Completed Safety Checklist for each Center	Program – 3C	7

Site Visit Activities

During the site visit the TAC will review the required documentation and work with the grantee to validate the grantee’s self-assessment. After a review of the documentation binder, the TAC will conduct further interviews with the project director and interviews with other key grantee and district or non-profit leaders and staff as scheduled prior to the visit. The TAC will also conduct scheduled center visits and engage in interviews with site coordinators and center staff. Interviews may also be scheduled with Afterschool Community Task Force members, principals, parents and other program stakeholders.

Site Visit Code of Conduct

All TACs have received extensive training in utilizing this site visit protocol and the site visit assessment forms. All TACs are required to review and follow the Code of Conduct¹ during the visit and similar conduct is expected from grantee program staff.

A. Carry out work with integrity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program personnel may be apprehensive, so treat all those you meet with courtesy and sensitivity, and try to minimize stress. • Try to allay anxiety by displaying respect, valuing opinions, and showing an interest in what every individual says. • Focus your attention and questions on topics that will reveal how well students and families are participating. • Approach the site visit with a clear understanding of that program’s goals and planned activities.
B. Act with the best interests of students and staff in mind.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not put students or staff in a position where they may have conflicting loyalties. • Emphasize that students and families come first and are at the center of the visit. • Wherever possible, work to others' convenience. • Be supportive; evidence given under undue stress is unreliable. • Under no circumstances criticize the work of an instructor or volunteer, or anyone else involved with the program during the course of the visit. • Try to understand what program staff are doing and why.
C. Be objective, base judgments on evidence not opinion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgments must be robust, fully supported by evidence, and defensible, and must inform the guiding questions. • Judgments must be reliable in that others would make the same judgment from the same

¹ These guidelines for conduct are adapted from and based, in part, on the British Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) Code of Conduct and the Massachusetts Charter School Site Visit Protocol. Retrieved from <http://www.doemass.org/charter/acct.html?section=visit>.

evidence.

- Judgments must be based on evidence gathered in the context of the program, not in comparison to personal preference or opinion.
- Be prepared to ask questions to establish whether a view is based on opinion or evidence.
- Discussion with program staff is part of the process to create a fair and secure evidence base from which judgments are made. Opinions may help inform discussion but are not part of the evidence.

Site Visit Schedule

It is expected that the site visit will last one full day, however additional follow-up visits may be required. The TAC will provide an agenda for the site visit at least one week prior to the meeting. A sample site visit agenda may look like:

9AM – 12PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entrance meeting with Project Director and TAC to review agenda for the visit• TAC conducts binder inventory and review• Conduct scheduled interviews with grant leadership team (project director, task-force member(s), business office, superintendent, school board member)
12PM – 1PM	Lunch Break
1PM – 6PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visit center(s)*• Interviews with site coordinators, instructors, principals and parents

* The number of centers visited will vary depending on how many are being served by the grant. For grants serving 5 or fewer centers, at least one center will be visited. For grants serving 6 to 10 centers, at least two centers will be visited. For grants serving 11 or more centers, at least three centers will be visited. When possible, center visits will be distributed among Elementary, Middle and High School sites and prior review of grantee data, random selection and TEA priorities may also impact center site visit selection.

Sample Interview Questions

During the site visit, the TAC will interview program and center level staff as part of their assessment of the program. Some of the questions will include:

Project Director

Question

Question
• Please explain what you see as the primary purpose of the ACE program.
• Describe your process for communicating with and managing site coordinators and other ACE program staff.
• How have you identified and communicated with community stakeholders?
• How do you decide what activities to offer?
• Describe the adult and family activities provided by your program.
• How are the academic learning needs of the students assessed by the ACE staff?
• How does your program include students with special needs?
• What is your role in collecting end of term data that is reported to TEA?
• Please describe how you budget program resources and provide regular oversight.

Site Coordinator

Question
• Describe your process for communicating with and managing instructors and other ACE program staff.
• How do you work/communicate with the ACE project director and other central office staff?
• How have you identified and communicated with community stakeholders?
• How do you decide what activities to offer?
• How do you balance activities among the four components?
• Describe the adult and family activities provided by your program.
• How are the academic learning needs of the students assessed by the ACE staff?
• How does your program include students with special needs?
• What is your role in collecting data that is reported to TEA?

Family Engagement Specialist

Question
• Describe how you communicate with each Site Coordinator and other ACE program staff.
• How do you work/communicate with the ACE project director and other central office staff in the school district?
• How do you connect with school day staff to learn about the needs of students and families?
• Describe the community stakeholders that you have identified and communicated with.
• How do you decide on and develop the family activities?
• How do you deliver the family activities (i.e., partnerships, staff)?
• Describe the adult and family activities provided by your program.
• How do you connect families to needed community resources?
• What is your role in collecting data that is reported to TEA?

Instructor

Question
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you communicate with the ACE site coordinator?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do the ACE staff and school day staff attend the same professional development offerings?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What information about curriculum is shared between ACE staff and the regular classroom teachers and how is it shared?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What information about individual students is shared between ACE staff and the regular classroom teacher and how is it shared?

Principal (or designee)

Question
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What actions has the program taken to engage school day staff and program staff? What are the strengths of that relationship? How would you like to see that relationship improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If applicable, how you do communicate with community members about the ACE program in your school?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do the ACE site coordinator and instructors participate in any of the same meetings and professional development offerings as school day staff?

Superintendent/Administrator

Question
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How has the program helped you accomplish your goals or contributed to the district/campus improvement plans, if applicable?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your district/organization doing to ensure the program continues after the initial grant funding expires?

Task-Force Member

Question
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please explain what you see as the primary purpose of the ACE program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is the task force helping to ensure the program continues after the initial grant funding expires?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give an example of your communication with key stakeholders in your community.

Partner

Question

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please explain what you see as the primary purpose of the ACE program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is your organization helping to ensure the program continues after the initial grant funding expires?

Parent

Question
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the program meet your needs?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have you been involved in or consulted with in determining what activities are offered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you like best about the program?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you been involved with the program?

Student

Question
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you like best about the ACE program?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What else do you wish the ACE program offered?

Post-Visit Activities

Following the site visit, the TAC will review the grantee self-assessment ratings, program binder provided by the grantee, and the results of interviews with program staff and stakeholders. The TAC will submit a final site visit report electronically to TEA and the grantee within 30 calendar days of the conclusion of the site visit. In areas where grantee and TAC ratings differ, the TAC will offer a detailed explanation and recommendations for technical assistance. This report will identify areas of strength and innovation, as well as include a technical assistance plan highlighting necessary actions and training needs. The TAC will then conduct follow-up activities with the project director to ensure they are on track to address the items noted in the final report.

Appendix A. PRIME: A Blueprint for Afterschool

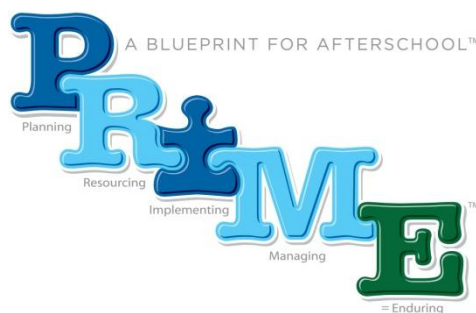
The PRIME blueprint was developed by TEA to help ACE programs by:

- Providing guidance to help grantees “build” the TEA vision of ACE
- Creating a framework of critical elements on which all stakeholders will focus
- Providing context for implementation assurance and support
- Serving as an organizer for training and communication
- Blending program requirements with research-based information

This blueprint includes four categories of activities and program requirements which include *Planning*, *Resourcing*, *Implementing* and *Managing* all focused on creating an *Enduring* program. These activities equal PRIME: A Blueprint for Afterschool.

Planning:

Create an enduring program through a comprehensive planning process that begins with a needs assessment that informs the strategic plan, each center’s service delivery plan and the annual operating plan.



Resourcing:

Connect the many valuable human and financial resources in your community to engage partners in strategic and long-lasting ways.

Implementing:

Implement a high-quality program that includes the four-component activity model through an effective and research-based curriculum delivered by well-prepared staff and volunteers.

Managing:

Manage resources effectively to create a dynamic program that meets performance standards, utilizes data to inform improvement, employs data confidentiality processes and complies with all grant requirements.

Enduring:

Maintain and evolve the program into one that has an enduring impact on students, families and the community.

To learn about the developmental methodology, the PRIME activities, key roles and responsibilities for implementing PRIME, you can view the PRIME: A Blueprint for Afterschool at: <http://www.texasace21.org/content/prime-blueprint-texas-ace>.

Appendix B. Critical Success Model

The critical success factors and milestones which TEA has established for its 21st Century Community Learning Centers program are included in the Cycle 6 Request for Application (RFA) Guidelines – Part 2: Program Guidelines.

Critical Success Factors

Critical success factors reflect behavioral changes that must be demonstrated by students enrolled in the program or by the adults working on their behalf. Critical success factors are essential for Texas ACE programs to succeed in meeting the five objectives defined for the program and are all indicators of student success. The TEA Department of State Initiatives, Division of Programs for School Readiness and Partnerships, has identified the following critical success factors for Texas ACE programs:

- Students' active participation and engagement in learning
- Students' increased sense of involvement in school
- Use of assessment data to revise/reevaluate student services
- Implementation of strategies learned through training

Milestones

Milestones are key strategies that establish the foundation on which critical success factors are built. The applicant must develop activities that ensure each of the milestones is met. The milestones include but are not limited to the following:

- Utilizing innovative instructional techniques for academic and enrichment activities
- Providing adult advocates, based on student need and in accordance with best practices
- Conducting ongoing/continuous student assessment to determine need
- Provide training opportunities for staff development

Texas ACE programs must be designed within a specific framework that establishes a foundation for effective implementation and high-quality programs for the attainment of stated goals. Therefore, the physical site of an ACE program where students are served will be established through a comprehensive, collaborative, and coordinated approach inclusive of the school, student, family, service providers, and the community. The ultimate goals are to help students meet state and local academic achievement standards and to help students graduate ready for college or the workforce.²

² Dynarski, M., Clark, L., Cobb, B., Finn, J., Rumberger, R., and Smink, J. (2008). "Dropout Prevention: A Practice Guide" (NCEE 2008-4025). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pdf/practiceguides/dp_pg_090308.pdf

21st Century Community Learning Centers – Critical Success Model

Outcomes	Critical Success Factors (behaviors)	Critical Success Factors Performance Indicators	Milestones (grantees)	Milestone Performance Indicators (measure)	Link to ACE PRIME Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve academics • Improve attendance • Improve behavior • Increase promotion rates • Increase graduate rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and families actively participating and engaged in learning • Students and families displaying leadership roles, volunteering to participate & lead activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and families increased attendance in afterschool programs • Students mentoring other students • Students and families facilitating activities <p><u>Measurement Tool</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor surveys/self assessment • Principal/ Project Director survey • Observation/ on-site visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize innovative instructional techniques for academic and enrichment activities based on research and best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Tracking- 21st CCLC Tracking System (Three times per year, Summer, Fall Spring) • Curriculum/ lesson plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program 3b - Activities • Program 5a – Staffing & Partners • Program 4 – Recruiting & Engaging Participants • Quality Assurance 9b – Center Project Plan & Program Schedule
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students increased sense of involvement in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students participating in extracurricular activities • Student/ Parent surveys • Increased number of mentors <p><u>Measurement Tool</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent surveys • Teacher surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adult advocates, based on student need and in accordance with best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings with students • Number of contacts made with parents, teachers, school day staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program 1 – Needs Assessment • Program 2b – Outreach & School Community Involvement • Program 3a - Activities • Program 5b - Staffing & Training • Data 6 - Participant Data Collection
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of assessment data to revise/ reevaluate student services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in student activities following re-assessment <p><u>Measurement Tool</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis of program files • Observation/ on-site visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing/ continuous student assessment to determine student’s needs and barriers to success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of assessment: pre/ post tests, needs assessments, case plans, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program 4 - Student & Family Involvement • Data 6 - Participant Data Collection
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of strategies learned through training • Noticeable difference in educational instruction (teaching methods) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in methods of instruction based on training <p><u>Measurement Tool</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self assessments • Supervisor assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all required training opportunities for staff development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of trainings • Schedule of trainings • Staff sign in sheets • Participant surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program 5a - Communication • Program 5b - Staffing & Training • Quality Assurance 8 - Independent Evaluation