

**REPORT OF SURVEY VISIT  
ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL OF NURSING AND TECHNOLOGY IN WESLACO, TEXAS  
VOCATIONAL NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

Consider the report of the survey visit on March 16-17, 2010 to St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Educational Program in Weslaco, Texas related to the 2009 NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate and complaints received by Board staff.

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>	<b>NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate</b>	<b>Number of First-Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>
2010 Preliminary Data	Pending	25.00%	1/4
2009	Initial with Warning	40.00%	8/20
2008	Initial	58.33%	7/12

- On July 19, 2007, St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology was approved by the Texas BON to begin operation of a vocational nursing (VN) educational program in Weslaco, Texas.
- The program enrolled an initial cohort of thirteen (13) students and these thirteen (13) students graduated from the program in October 2008.
- The program enrolled a second cohort and a third cohort of fifteen (15) students each; the second cohort graduated on April 2, 2009 and the third cohort graduated on November 5, 2009.
- On November 19-20, 2008, BON staff conducted a focused survey visit to evaluate the program's status regarding compliance with the Texas BON rules and regulations in regard to the program's initial approval status.
- The 2008 NCLEX-PN® pass rate was 58.33% (7/12).
- In January 2009, the program initiated a night (5 p.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Thursday) program that was designed to be completed in seventeen (17) months and two (2) weeks. Two (2) night cohorts were enrolled, with the first night cohort comprised of sixteen (16) students scheduled to graduate in June 2010 and the second night cohort, fourteen (14) students, was scheduled to graduate in November 2010.
- At the January 2009 quarterly Board meeting, the Board approved continuation of the initial approval status of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology and issued two (2) commendations, four (4) recommendations, and three (3) requirements.

- The three (3) requirements mandated that the VN program director and the VN faculty: (1) develop/revise current student policies related to unprofessional conduct, dismissal from the program, and readmission to the program that clearly reflect the intent of the Texas Nursing Practice Act and the Texas BON rules and regulations in regard to patient safety and unprofessional conduct as outlined in Rule 214.8(e)(1-4); (2) revise course requirements/assignments to eliminate those activities/assignments that are not part of the scope of practice for licensed vocational nurses in Texas and revise the syllabi for the Fundamentals and Personal Development courses to include specific mention of the Texas Nursing Practice Act and the Texas BON rules and regulations, including the Texas Standards of Nursing Practice, in the course objectives and content outline; and (3) develop specific criteria to use in the selection of new affiliating agencies/clinical facilities or clinical practice settings that address safety and the need for students to achieve the program outcomes (goals) and course objectives through the practice of nursing care or observational experiences taking into consideration those areas outlined in the rule.
- In May 2009, a new VN program director was appointed to the director position due to the resignation of the former VN program director. The VN program director had the qualifications required by the rule and had served as faculty at the school since August 2008.
- As required by Rule 214.4(c)(2)(B), Approval, St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology VN Program was instructed to complete a Self Study report related to the 2008 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 58.33% (7/12) in order to evaluate factors that contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-PN® examination and include in the report a description of the corrective measures to be implemented.
- The Self Study Report was presented to Board staff at the time of the August 2009 survey visit and provided a thorough overview of proposed changes to the program of study.
- During Fall 2009 Board staff entertained multiple student complaints regarding the program, faculty, and administration. The majority of the complaints addressed financial issues, as well as faculty/student communication issues.
- At the October 2009 Board meeting, the Board voted to change the initial approval status of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology to initial with warning and issued two (2) requirements.
- The two requirements mandated that: (1) in accordance with Rule 214.4(a)(1)(b)&(c), related to Approval: The program must meet requirements and respond to all recommendations issued by the Board and the licensing examination result of the first graduating class must be evaluated by the Board. Approval status of programs may be changed if there is a failure to maintain an 80% passing rate on the licensing examination by first-time candidates. The first graduating class of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology demonstrated a 58.33% NCLEX-PN® pass rate. Therefore, the program director shall submit monthly progress reports to the Texas BON, including students' grades, standardized test scores, and clinical performance evaluations. The first monthly monitoring report is due by December 5, 2009. In addition, the program director shall provide an evaluation of the implementation of effectiveness of corrective measures to the Texas BON by April 1, 2010; and (2) in accordance with Rule 214.6(i) related to Administration and Organization: The director/coordinator shall have the authority to direct the nursing educational program in all its phases, including approval of teaching staff, selection of appropriate clinical sites, admission, progression, probation, dismissal of students, and enforcement of student policies. During the interview with administration and the program director, it became apparent that the program director needs to be given the authority to direct the nursing educational program in all its phases, as outlined in Rule 214.6(l). Therefore, the program director shall be required to submit to the Texas BON examples of minutes that reflect the director has full authority for the program of study by April 1, 2009.
- The second program director resigned in March 2010; a new program director who had the qualifications required by the rule and had served as faculty at the school since November 2009 was immediately appointed.

- Throughout Winter 2010 Board staff continued to receive complaints regarding St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology. The complaints described unqualified clinical faculty, inadequate clinical supervision by faculty, inadequate clinical learning experiences, grading inconsistencies, and variances between the day and night cohorts.
- In March 2010, the preliminary 2010 NCLEX-PN®. pass rate was 25% (1/4).
- A focused survey visit was conducted on March 16-17, 2010. The purpose of the visit was to gather facts to present to the Board at the April 2010 quarterly meeting in order to discuss the approval status of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology.
- Subsequent to historical data, there is concern that the fifty-four (54) students currently enrolled in the program of study will be able to demonstrate successful outcomes on the NCLEX-PN®. Student enrollment, as of March 17, 2010, is divided among the following four (4) cohorts:
  - (1) Cohort 1 (Day) is comprised of 12 students scheduled to graduate May 6, 2010;
  - (2) Cohort 2 (Night) is comprised of 15 students scheduled to graduate June 30, 2010;
  - (3) Cohort 3 (Day) is comprised of 12 students scheduled to graduate December 16, 2010; and
  - (4) Cohort 4 (Night) is comprised of 15 students scheduled to graduate February 3, 2011.

#### **SURVEY VISIT FINDINGS:**

- There are currently four (4) cohorts in place, two (2) day cohorts and two (2) night cohorts. Each day cohort is thirteen (13) months and two (2) weeks duration and each night cohorts is seventeen (17) months and two (2) weeks duration.
- Prior to the start of each cohort, the school conducts a four (4) hour orientation session for incoming learners and their families to ensure that learners, as well as their families, have a clear understanding of the educational rigor of the program of study and the required learner time commitment.
- There are eight (8) faculty members, four (4) full-time faculty and four (4) part-time faculty. Four (4) of the faculty are Registered Nurses, three (3) are Licensed Vocational Nurses, and one (1) is a non-nurse.
- The curriculum has been revised so that Level I is comprised of didactic content only: Anatomy & Physiology/Medical Terminology, Nutrition & Diet Therapy, Pharmacology/Basic Math, Microbiology, and Growth & Development.
- Clinical learning experiences are provided in Level II and Level III.
- The school has clinical affiliation agreements with thirteen (13) clinical facilities in the Rio Grande Valley, including five (5) acute care hospitals, five (5) long-term care facilities, one (1) behavioral health center, one (1) pediatric and allergy clinic, and one (1) medical clinic.
- At the time of the March survey visit, faculty to student ratios in clinical learning experiences allowed a 1:8 ratio.
- The school utilizes three (3) different standardized testing systems throughout the program. They are used for admission, progression, remediation, and exit examination purposes.

#### **PROS AND CONS:**

##### Pros:

- The Advisory Board has an active role in the operation of the school, including interviewing all applicants for admission and meeting frequently with administration to discuss issues.

- The program director and faculty verbalized willingness to adopt new instructional strategies in order to promote learner success.

Cons:

- The program's preliminary 2010 NCLEX-PN® pass rate is 25.00% (1/4).
- The program director and faculty do not possess experience in vocational nursing education.
- Multiple student complaints were submitted to the Board office. These complaints are specific to:
  - (1) unqualified clinical faculty;
  - (2) inadequate clinical supervision by faculty;
  - (3) inadequate clinical learning experiences;
  - (4) grading inconsistencies; and
  - (5) variances between the day and night cohorts.

**BACKGROUND FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

Rule 214.4(a)(4) sets forth the parameters of conditional approval status as follows:

*(4) Conditional approval is issued by the Board for a specified time to provide the program opportunity to correct deficiencies.*

*(A) The program shall not admit students while on conditional status.*

*(B) The Board may establish specific criteria to be met in order for the program's conditional approval status to be changed.*

*(C) Depending upon the degree to which the Board's legal and educational requirements are met, the Board may change the approval status to full approval or full approval with warning, or may withdraw approval.*

Therefore, the purposes of conditional approval status are to allow faculty additional time to correct deficiencies which include improving the performance of graduates on the licensing examination and to protect additional students from the risk of receiving educational preparation that does not meet Board standards.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Move to accept the survey visit report, change the approval status from initial with warning to conditional and cease enrollment until the graduates demonstrate a pass rate for first time test takers of at least 80% on the 2010 NCLEX-PN® examination and issue the commendation, recommendations, and requirements in the attached letter (Attachment # 2).

**SURVEY VISIT  
SUMMARY REPORT**

**NAME OF NURSING PROGRAM:** St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Educational Program

**NURSING PROGRAM DIRECTOR:** Hermelinda Bolling, RN

**REASON FOR SURVEY VISIT:** To conduct a focused survey visit subsequent to the number of student complaints and the program's low pass rates on the 2009 NCLEX-PN® examination.

**DATE(S) OF SURVEY VISIT:** March 16-17, 2010

**SURVEY VISITOR(S):** Virginia D. Ayars, MS, RN and Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN

**TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING (BON) APPROVAL STATUS:** Initial with Warning

**DATE OF LAST BON SURVEY VISIT:** August 25, 2009

**NAME OF ACCREDITING AGENCIES:** No accreditation. Licensed by the Texas Workforce Commission.

**ACTIVITIES DURING SURVEY VISIT:**

Board staff:

- met with the school owners and administrator;
- met with a member of the St. Michael's Advisory Board;
- interviewed the newly-appointed VN program director;
- provided an intensive orientation to Board Rule 214 to the newly-appointed VN program director;
- interviewed nursing students and nursing faculty;
- reviewed records and documents; and
- conducted a survey conference with the school administrators and the VN program director.

Prior to the survey visit, board staff reviewed the 2009 Self-Study Report, the 2009 NEPIS and the 2009 CANEP.

**SURVEY VISIT FINDINGS:**

Positive findings revealed during the March 16-17, 2010 survey visit include:

- The administration has provided ongoing support of the vocational nursing educational program in a period of transition as there is a new nursing program director and new faculty members.
- The program director and VN faculty are dedicated to ensure the success of the program as demonstrated by their proactive efforts to meet learner needs.
- Although new to the role, the program director immediately identified math concepts as problematic to learners and, subsequently, implemented instructional strategies to facilitate learner application of math knowledge. The program director also integrated pharmacology course content in all of the clinical learning experiences in order to assist learners apply knowledge.

- Faculty are available from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. In addition, faculty are available from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every Friday to tutor any student requesting assistance.
- Students articulated appreciation for the ongoing diligence of the program director and faculty to implement changes to the program of study to ensure learner success.
- Students expressed gratitude for the opportunity to attend a vocational nursing educational program in their local community, the Rio Grande Valley, that offers small classes.

Areas of concern revealed during the survey visit include:

- Although the new program director meets the requirement of Rule 214 and has extensive experience in nursing practice, the program director does not have experience teaching in a vocational nursing educational program.
- Faculty are not experienced vocational nurse educators.
- A comprehensive self-study was completed in August 2009 and identified corrective measures were implemented; however, there appear to be ongoing issues regarding learner success on the NCLEX-PN® as preliminary results for the program's 2010 pass rate reveal an NCLEX-PN® pass rate of 25% (1/4).

**PROPOSED COMMENDATION:**

- Commend the Advisory Board of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology for their active involvement in the operation of the school and their demonstrated commitment to ensure learner success.

**PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Recommend that all students become involved in Study Groups.
- Recommend that a seasoned nursing consultant with extensive experience in vocational nursing education be hired.

**PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS:**

- The program director shall submit quarterly progress reports to the Texas BON, including students' grades, standardized test scores, and clinical performance evaluations. The first monthly monitoring report is due by June 1, 2010.
- A written Faculty Development Plan shall be established in order to assist faculty to become effective nurse educators and shall be submitted to the Texas BON by June 1, 2010.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept the survey visit report, and issue the commendation, recommendations, and requirements to be met as indicated in the attached letter (See Attachment #2).

**DRAFT LETTER**

April 22, 2010

Hermelinda Bolling, RN  
Director, Vocational Nursing Educational Program  
St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology  
3001 North Westgate  
Weslaco, Texas 78596

Dear Ms. Bolling:

At the April 22-23, 2010 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the approval status of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Education Program based on the survey visit report and the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2009. The Board wishes to thank you, Ms. Martha Montelongo and ..... for being present at the meeting to answer questions.

Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the decision of the Board to:

1. Change the approval status of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Educational Program from full with warning to conditional.
2. Set the time for conditional approval status at such time that the graduates demonstrate a pass rate for first time test takers of at least 80% on the 2010 NCLEX-PN® examination.

Rule 214.4(a)(4) sets forth the parameters of conditional approval status as follows:

*(4) Conditional approval is issued by the Board for a specified time to provide the program the opportunity to correct deficiencies.*

*(A) The program shall not admit students while on conditional status.*

*(B) The Board may establish specific criteria to be met in order for the program's conditional approval status to be removed.*

*(C) Depending upon the degree to which the Board's legal and educational requirements are met, the Board may change the approval status to full approval or full approval with warning, or may withdraw approval.*

The purposes of conditional approval status are to allow faculty additional time to correct deficiencies which include improving the performance of graduates on the licensing examination and to protect additional students from the risk of receiving education preparation that does not meet Board standards. **Therefore**, the program must continue to evaluate the changes and strategies which were made in response to recommendations and requirements issued at the April 2010 Board meeting. **The program shall not admit students until given permission by the Board.**

### **COMMENDATION:**

Commend the Advisory Board of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology for their active involvement in the operation of the school and their demonstrated commitment to ensure learner success.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Recommend that all students become involved in Study Groups.
2. Recommend that a seasoned nursing consultant with extensive experience in vocational nursing education be hired.

### **PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Rule 214.4(a)(1)(b)&(c) related to Approval: Approval status of programs may be changed if there is a failure to maintain an 80% passing rate on the licensing examination by first-time candidates. The first graduating class of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology demonstrated a 58.33% 2008 NCLEX-PN® pass rate. The next class achieved a 40% 2009 NCLEX-PN® pass rate. **Therefore**, the program director shall submit quarterly progress reports to the Texas BON, including students' grades, standardized test scores, and clinical performance evaluations. The first quarterly monitoring report shall be submitted to the Texas BON by June 1, 2010.
2. Rule 214.7(a)(B) related to Faculty: Written policies for nursing faculty shall include: plans for faculty orientation to the institution and the nursing program, faculty development, and evaluation of faculty. A plan for nursing faculty development shall be offered to encourage and assist faculty members to meet the nursing program's needs, as well as individual faculty member's professional development needs. A review of faculty credentials and resumes revealed that faculty did not possess experience in vocational nursing education. **Therefore**, a written Faculty Development Plan shall be established in order to assist faculty to become effective nurse educators and shall be submitted to the Texas BON by June 1, 2010.

A recommendation is a specific suggestion based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which the program must respond but in a method of their choosing. Requirements are mandatory criterion based on program assessment directly related to the rule that shall be addressed in the manner prescribed. Documentation of the address of the above requirements to be met shall be submitted to the Board office at the times identified in each requirement.

If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance, please contact Board staff at 512-305-7660 or by email at [virginia.ayars@bon.state.tx.us](mailto:virginia.ayars@bon.state.tx.us).

Sincerely,

Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP  
President

Virginia D. Ayars, MS, RN  
Nursing Consultant for Education

cc: Marta Montelongo, Administrator