**Consideration of Summary of Self-Study Reports
for Vocational Nursing Education Programs for 2016**

Background:

Thirteen vocational nursing (VN) education programs were required to submit Self-Study Reports to Texas Board of Nursing (Board) Staff in 2016 after their 2015 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates fell below 80%. The group includes eight VN programs in community colleges, three VN programs in career schools and colleges, one VN program in a hospital, and one VN program in a private university. Rule 214.4(c)(2)(B) *Ongoing Approval Procedures* requires that "When the passing score of first-time NCLEX-PN® candidates is less than 80% on the examination during the examination year, the nursing program shall submit a Self-Study Report that evaluates factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented. . . ."

Board Staff invited individual program directors and their respective nursing faculty to participate in hour-long conference calls to discuss program issues and to provide guidance for developing the Self-Study Reports. The calls were an unexpectedly valuable experience for Board Staff since they provided an opportunity to speak with administrators, program directors, and faculty members representing VN programs throughout the state.

This report captures information from all of the Self-Study Reports and focuses on common factors that may have contributed to the lowered pass rates for 2015. Pass rates among the 13 programs ranged from 56.10% to 79.67%, with 11 programs experiencing pass rates between 57.63% and 79.61%. The largest candidate pool from a single nursing education program was 182 first-time test-takers while the smallest candidate group was three first-time test-takers.

Of the 95 Board approved vocational nursing education programs, 81 programs had acceptable pass rates during the 2015 NCLEX-PN® examination year, January 1 through December 31. Further, 16 of the 95 programs achieved an NCLEX-PN® pass rate of 100% for the 2015 examination year.

Data presented in the Self-Study Reports were catalogued into sections following the format in Education Guideline 3.2.1.a. *Writing a Self-Study Report on Evaluation of Factors that Contributed to the Graduates' Performance on the NCLEX-PN® or NCLEX-RN® Examination*. Factors have been categorized under headings in the Self-Study Report.

Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX® Examination Pass Rates – Students	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Students
Inadequate admission standards	Evaluate and strengthen admission standards.
	Require applicant interviews.
	Increase marketing and recruitment efforts.
	Extend deadline for applications, consider dual credit high school program, increase community awareness of program, and encourage applicants for the associate degree nursing education program to also apply for VN program.
Lack of financial aid for VN students	Work with Financial Aid Department to expand offerings.
Ineffective remediation plan	Strengthen remediation plan.
Increased need for remediation	Review, revise and strengthen remediation policies and adhere to the policies.
Students not participating in remediation	Encourage students to take advantage of remediation.
Weak, ineffective readmission criteria	Review, revise, and strengthen readmission policies.
Increased numbers of high-risk students; need to timely identify at-risk students and intervene	Develop criteria to timely identify at-risk students and provide immediate remediation to at-risk students, working individually with students.
Ineffective, weak progression criteria	Review, revise, and strengthen progression policies.
Students not reading assigned material	Implement boot camp in new student orientation to clarify expectations of students.
Need to increase student engagement and improve student morale	Improve student learning environment, reengage student leadership council, and hold monthly student focus groups with Dean.
	Initiate Student Council and identify student representatives.

Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX® Examination Pass Rates – Policies	Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Policies
Evaluate current policies to determine effectiveness of admission, readmission, and progression policies	Conduct regular faculty meetings to consider effectiveness of current policies.
	Develop methods to keep re-entry students engaged between the time of leaving the program to the time of returning to the program.
Inconsistencies in using policies	Plan faculty development to ensure consistent use of policies.
Policies regarding re-entry too lenient	Review, revise, and strengthen re-entry policies.
Evaluate and monitor attendance policies	Review, revise, and enforce attendance policies.
Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX® Examination Pass Rates – Faculty	**Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Faculty**
Hiring of novice inexperienced faculty	Evaluate faculty salaries to better recruit experienced faculty and request funds to increase faculty salaries.
Inadequate faculty orientation	Evaluate and strengthen faculty orientation.
Ineffective use of faculty evaluations	Develop a policy to ensure effective use of faculty evaluations.
Inconsistent faculty use of inter-rater reliability policy	Establish consistency in understanding and use of inter-rater reliability policies by all faculty.
High faculty turnover	Evaluate orientation plan for education and training to incentivize faculty.
Too many LVN faculty members	Hire more full time vs. part time faculty and more RN faculty.
Faculty inexperienced in writing NCLEX® style questions	Offer faculty Test Development and Item Writing Workshop through the National League for Nursing.
Lack of effective teaching strategies	Assist faculty to learn new teaching strategies in faculty meetings.

Lack of communication between didactic and clinical faculty	Plan for better communication and faculty visits to clinical sites.
No oversight of clinical instruction	Plan for consistency in directions given to clinical faculty and oversight to gain consistent teaching practices and effective use of clinical time.
Improve faculty satisfaction and retention	Survey faculty satisfaction annually and involve faculty in decision-making processes.
Inconsistency among faculty teaching of nursing skills	Provide annual skills fair to promote consistency in teaching nursing skills and medication math.
Inconsistencies in teaching between day and evening tracks	Clarify expectations for equal nursing education experiences between evening and day programs.
Conflict among faculty members	Consider methods to address conflict resolution with faculty members.
Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX® Examination Pass Rates – Curriculum	**Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Curriculum**
Need for major curriculum revision	Add interactive, educational games to reinforce knowledge, student engagement, and teamwork.
	Developed new curriculum plan with more appropriate Anatomy & Physiology course; divided pharmacology course into two courses; reduced the number of courses in two quarters; combined the maternal infant and pediatric courses into a Maternal Child course; and eliminated math course and incorporated math content into Pharmacology course.
	Review entire curriculum and plan for better integration between didactic and clinical.
	Evaluate effectiveness of recently revised curriculum.
	Rewrite course objectives.

Lack of inclusion of DECs in course objectives	Review DECs and fully incorporate.
Need to emphasize NCLEX® Test Plan	Incorporate information from Test Plan into all areas of curriculum.
Lack of clinical accessibility for Medical/Surgical, Maternal/Child experiences	Continue to seek new clinical learning opportunities to meet program/course objectives.
Need increased use of simulation	Grant received from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to purchase simulation equipment.
	Faculty attended conference on simulation and equipment purchased via a Perkins Grant.
	Hire full-time Simulation Coordinator to lead the initiative. Extend use of simulation to 10 - 15%.
Need alternative clinical activities	Implement virtual simulation teaching in all clinical courses.
	Faculty attended conference on simulation and equipment purchased via a Perkins Grant.
Change in curriculum length	Evaluate curriculum effectiveness after cohort graduates.
Issues with instruction in Pharmacology course	Encourage students to take higher level Pharmacology course.
Need more practice time for nursing skills prior to patient care	Schedule open skills lab hours for student practice.
Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX® Examination Pass Rates – Teaching and Evaluation	**Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Testing and Evaluation**
Inadequate evaluation of student achievement of learning objectives	Ongoing analysis to identify areas of weakness in the curriculum and evaluation of learning measures.
	Engage faculty in inter-rater reliability agreement for consistency in grading.
Lack of rigor and difficulty in test items	Increase rigor of items by offering faculty development.

Inconsistent use of blueprint and test plans	Assist faculty to learn or enhance item analysis and test writing skills using NCSBN education offerings.
Grade inflation	Discontinue grade inflation practices; give less weight to assignments and quizzes.
Insufficient Test Security; compromised test banks	Monitor test-takers, clearly define dishonesty and cheating, use multiple versions of exams, and assign seating during exams.
	Exams to be developed by instructors.
	Develop new test security plans.
	Engage additional security measures.
Concerns about online test security	Establish student agreement about online testing.
Need to re-evaluate use of standardized exams and required scores	Require standardized exams at completion of each course with mandatory remediation.
Ineffective use of data from standardized exam results	Develop standardized examination tracking tool to assure items of improvement are addressed.
Incorporate more standardized exam content in lecture or clinical learning experiences	Utilize standardized exam proctored assessments throughout the curriculum.
Standardized specialty tests not utilized effectively	Redesign schedule for use of specialty exams.
Need for better NCLEX® preparation	Change to different standardized exam; integrating NCLEX-type test questions into each course to encourage clinical decision-making skills, and plan for review and remediation.
	Better utilize the developed test bank.
Lack of student skills in taking standardized exams on computers	More exposure to computerized exams to increase student proficiency in type of test.
Limited Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Tool since 2009	Revise TPE and better utilize.
Need for revisions and updates to Total Program Evaluation Plan	Review and revise TPE.

Poor response rate on Graduate/ Employer Surveys	Utilize Facebook and assign faculty to deliver employer surveys.
No Total Program Evaluation Plan exists	Establish and implement TPE.
Factors That May Have Contributed to NCLEX® Examination Pass Rates – Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical	**Suggested Corrective Measures to Improve Success – Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical**
Inconsistencies in grading and grading criteria	Review grading policies on a regular basis and plan faculty development to agree on grading.
Ineffective clinical evaluation tools resulting in grade inflation	Design new clinical evaluation tools.
Need more rigorous clinical skills testing	Revised clinical evaluation tool and increased passing standard.

Staff Recommendation:
This report is for information only. No Board action is required.