Summary of Request:
Consider the report of the May 29-30, 2019 regular survey visit to Texas State Technical College West Texas (TSTC) Vocational Nursing Education (VN) program in Sweetwater, Texas.

Historical Perspective:
- TSTC was created in 1967 as the James Connally Technical Institute of Texas A&M and in 1969, it became an independent state system with a new name Texas State Technical Institute (TSTI), and its own Board of Regents.
- Beginning in 1970 as the demand for technical education continued, campuses have been established in Abilene, Breckenridge, Brownwood, Fort Bend County, Harlingen, Marshall, North Texas, Sweetwater, Waco, and Williamson County.
- TSTC is the only college in Texas to adopt a funding model based entirely on student employment outcomes – aligning with its purpose of strengthening Texas with a highly skilled, technical competent workforce.
- In 2016, the decision was made to integrate all 10 TSTC campuses in order to standardize operations and programs to better serve the state.
- TSTC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
- TSTC VN program in Sweetwater was established in 1973 and shares some physical spaces with the Associate Degree Nursing Education (ADN) Program.
- The TSTC VN program in Sweetwater has an extension site in Breckenridge.
- Other nursing programs on TSTC campus sites are in Harlingen and Brownwood. These are independent programs from TSTC in Sweetwater.
- TSTC Sweetwater offers 12 Allied Health programs, Associate of Applied Science degrees and certificates.
- Marchelle Taylor, BSN, RN, is the Director for the VN program and was approved by the Board September 1, 2018. Ms. Taylor served as faculty for the VN program over five years prior to her appointment.
- The last routine VN program survey visit was conducted in June, 2013.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NURSE EXAMINATION YEAR</th>
<th>BON APPROVAL STATUS</th>
<th>PASS RATES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF FIRST TIME CANDIDATES (PASSED/TOTAL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>91.18%</td>
<td>31/34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>62.00%</td>
<td>31/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>65.38%</td>
<td>34/52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>87.50%</td>
<td>28/32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Due to the 2017 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 62.00%, the previous Program Director and faculty members were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) to
evaluate factors that may have contributed to the graduates’ performance on the NCLEX-PN® examination and a description of corrective measures to be implemented.

- The previous Program Director and faculty members identified the following corrective measures:
  - Increase the number of admissions packets accepted for review by two percent each year;
  - Prepare application packets for distribution soon after each admission cycle closes;
  - Assign greater importance to entrance exam scores by awarding additional points for higher scores;
  - Require returning students to repeat all core nursing courses;
  - Request increased funding from school for faculty development;
  - Improve student engagement by increasing interactive time during class;
  - Implement new clinical evaluation tools that provides richer evidence of student performance and professionalism;
  - Implement nursing process care planning and documentation that includes a grading rubric;
  - Eliminate repeating questions on final exams and utilize new questions that reinforce concepts;
  - Develop a testing policy that includes increasing the number of select all that apply questions throughout the program;
  - Adopt a standardized testing system that measures content mastery at specific data points in the curriculum; and
  - Review and revise the Total Program Evaluation to include less frequent evaluation of elements;

- These efforts for improvement have been successful as evidenced by the 91.18% pass rate for 2018.
- Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN conducted survey visits to both the ADN and VN Education Programs at TSTC on May 29-30, 2019.

Findings from survey visit for the VN Program:
See survey visit report in Attachment #1.

Positive Aspects of Survey Visit:
- Administration is extremely supportive, understands the nursing shortage and the need for the VN program.
- Faculty are dedicated, well-qualified, cohesive and function as a team with the best interest of students in mind.
- Students indicated faculty is always available, communicates effectively, and understands their needs.
- All students interviewed plan to attend the ADN program and feel that the transition will be a seamless process.
- Clinical affiliation agencies are abundant and provide rich clinical learning experiences.
- The VN program serves a broad, rural area.

Concerns of Survey Visit
- A nursing faculty development plan is not offered. Faculty are expected to pursue opportunities on their own.
• A full-time assistant serves as administrative and clerical support for all allied health programs. Board staff discussed this as a concern since the directors and faculty are required to assist with student registration and advising for students not yet enrolled in the program which limits their focus on program needs.

Ms. Taylor, Director, was carrying a teaching load of 24 hours each week, due to vacant faculty positions. She typically teaches 10 hours each week.

The Program Director’s nursing license expired March 31, 2019. Board Staff suggested that Ms. Taylor register herself and all nursing faculty in the NCSBN e-notify service to prevent their licenses from expiring through an alert system.

Note: The license was reinstated June 10, 2019.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #1:
Rule 214.7.(b)(5) states that 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 members’ professional development needs. Faculty Development consists of institution wide workshops related to teaching with no plan for nursing faculty development offered. Faculty are expected to pursue opportunities on their own.

Requirement #1:
The administration shall develop a nursing faculty development plan that will encourage and assist faculty members to meet the nursing program’s needs as well as individual faculty members’ professional development needs and submit the plan to Board Staff no later than December 1, 2019.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #2:
Rule 214.11.(c) states that the director/coordinator and faculty shall have adequate secretarial and clerical assistance to meet the needs of the program. A full-time assistant serves as administrative and clerical support for all allied health programs. Board staff discussed this as a concern since the directors and faculty are required to assist with student registration and advising for students not yet enrolled in the program which limits their focus on program needs.

Requirement #2:
The administration shall develop an action plan to provide adequate secretarial and clerical assistance to meet the needs of the program and submit the plan to Board Staff no later than December 1, 2019.

Staff Rationale for Recommendation #1:
Education rules related to Faculty require that written policies concerning workload for the director shall allow for sufficient time for administrative responsibilities consistent with Rule 214.6 and that written policies for nursing faculty workload shall allow sufficient time for faculty to accomplish those activities related to the teaching-learning process. At the time of the survey visit, Ms. Taylor, was carrying a teaching load of 24 hours each week and faculty indicated they do not have time for curriculum development or other activities due to the faculty shortage.

Recommendation #1:
It is recommended that administration and nursing faculty discuss a satisfactory teaching arrangement that will allow time for administrative work and activities related to the teaching-learning process. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than December 1, 2019.
Recommendations are suggestions based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which a program must respond but in a method of their choosing.

**Staff Recommendation:**
Move to accept the report of findings from the May 29-30, 2019 survey visit to the Texas State Technical College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Sweetwater, Texas and issue the requirements and recommendation in the attached letter (see attachment #2).
Summary of Survey Visit
Texas State Technical College in Sweetwater, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program

Purpose of Survey Visit: Routine Survey Visit
Date of Survey Visit: May 29-30, 2019
Board Staff Conducting Visit: Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Nursing Consultant for Education

Education Consultant met with:
- Administrators:
  - Rick Denbow, Provost
  - Lance Eastman, Vice President of Student Learning
  - Andy Weaver, L.P., AAS EMS, Division Chair/EMS Director
  - Marchelle Taylor, BSN, RN, Program Director
- VN Faculty:
  - Trisha Otts, MSN, RN
  - Sharon Zetzman-Sparks, RN
- Three VN students

Education Consultant reviewed:
- Curriculum plan and all syllabi;
- Faculty & Student Handbooks;
- Clinical evaluation tools and clinical affiliation agreements;
- Faculty and student files;
- Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPE) and data;
- Faculty meeting minutes; and
- 2018 Nursing Education Program Information Surveys (NEPIS)

Education Consultant:
- held initial conference with administration;
- toured program facilities;
- observed a class in session; and
- conducted an exit interview with administrators.

Summary of Findings:
Administration:
- Administration is extremely supportive, understands the nursing shortage and the need for the VN program.
- Administration indicated that the VN program adds value to the college and allows students to seamlessly matriculate to the ADN program.
- Marchelle Taylor, BSN, RN serves as Program Director and was approved by the Board September 1, 2018. Ms. Taylor has been a nurse for 25 years and has over five years of nursing education experience.
Ms. Taylor was faculty for the program for five years before assuming the administrative role as Director. She is accountable for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all the VN nursing programs for TSTC West Texas.

Ms. Taylor indicated she is fully supported by administration and has the authority to direct the VN program in all phases. At the time of the survey visit, Ms. Taylor, was carrying a teaching load of 24 hours each week, due to vacant faculty positions. She typically teaches 10 hours each week.

Upon review of the program director’s file, Board staff discovered the director’s nursing license was not current.

Note: Ms. Taylor promptly handled this issue and her license was reinstated by the Board of Nursing on June 10, 2019.

Faculty:

The VN program instruction is carried out by two full-time faculty and the program director. At the time of the survey visit, there were three vacant faculty positions. One new faculty member was hired and scheduled to begin the week following the survey visit.

Faculty members offer a rich diversity in their education and experiential backgrounds. Faculty experience in nursing education varies from five years to 19 years. One faculty member is Master’s prepared and one is planning to further her nursing education.

Two faculty and the director are designated to procure contracts with clinical agencies, to evaluate clinical agencies along with other faculty, to schedule clinical experiences, and to maintain a collaborative relationship with clinical sites.

New faculty orientation is college wide and nursing department specific that is structured and individualized with an assigned nursing faculty mentor. The nursing faculty handbook contains detailed information regarding the orientation.

Faculty members are typically engaged in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation. Faculty indicated they do not have time for curriculum development or other activities at this time due to the faculty shortage.

Faculty meetings are held at least monthly, minutes of meetings are maintained and reflect that faculty committee members are involved in planning and decision-making.

Full-time faculty workload is 40 hours per week on a 12-month contract. Load hours include a combination of classroom and clinical teaching, student tutoring and remediation, office hours, preparation time, and committee/curriculum work.

Faculty Development consists of institution wide workshops related to teaching. There was no nursing faculty development plan offered and faculty are expected to pursue opportunities on their own. Board staff discussed the importance of continued competency for faculty including the importance of networking with faculty from other schools. Faculty members expressed the desire to attend the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators annual conference.

The nursing faculty handbook includes all written policies required by Board rule 214.7.

Students:

At the time of the survey visit, there were 17 students enrolled on the Breckenridge campus and 16 students on the Sweetwater campus. The current cohort is scheduled to graduate in December 2019.

The VN program admits one cohort per year every Fall semester in August. The new cohort of 71 students, 36 in Breckenridge and 35 in Sweetwater, is scheduled to begin on August 26, 2019.
- Student policies are written, well-defined, provided to all students during orientation and include all Board required content.
- Students have an active student governance, the Student Advisory Council, with two student representatives from each cohort on each campus, elected by their peers. They have representation on faculty committees including Student Concerns. The representatives are expected to provide input regarding the curriculum, student policies, and student concerns, and report results to their peers.
- Each cohort of students may elect to form a student VN club to hold fundraising events for pinning and graduation fees.
- Student remediation is mandatory with faculty for any student making below an 80 on any exam. A student action plan is developed and implemented.
- Student learning needs and obstacles to their success are identified early in the program. Remediation of at risk students includes counseling, mentoring opportunities, and help sessions.
- Students stated they enrolled in the VN program because of the good reputation, the proximity to home, the reputation among nurses who attended the program, the program structure, the remediation provided by faculty, the different ways instructors teach and the faculty make students from both campuses feel blended.
- Students cited challenges as balancing work and school, the transition to new instructors, and learning the different expectations for each clinical rotation.
- All students interviewed plan to attend the TSTC ADN program and indicate they feel it will be an easy transition.
- Students have input into faculty evaluations by completing a faculty and course evaluation at the end of each course.

**Program of Study:**

- The VN program admits a new cohort once a year in August, is a 16-month full-time training program consisting of four semesters that are 15 weeks long, with a total of 50 semester credit hours including pre-requisite courses.
- Students completing the program are awarded a Vocational Nursing Certificate 2.
- Board staff attended a class session related to medical-surgical nursing for Level III students. The material was presented logically and was well organized. Students were interactive with the instructor, asked questions, and the faculty member was dynamic in her presentation of the material.
- The curriculum for the VN program is competency based and indicates leveling of nursing content, advancing in difficulty from simple to complex.
- The VN Program utilizes a hybrid teaching-learning environment. Course content is delivered via face-to-face lectures and presentations and online through TSTC’s Learning Management System (LMS).
- All exams are computer based, administered on the TSTC campus and proctored. A blueprint for each exam is available online for students to access.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECS)*(2010) are incorporated into the curriculum as evidenced in the syllabi.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for progression, remediation, and graduation purposes.
- Future plans: The ADN program has received grant funds that will be utilized for a simulation laboratory that will be shared with the VN program.
Clinical Learning Experiences:

- TSTC has active clinical contracts with a variety of clinical agencies including acute care, long term care, residential care homes, primary care clinics, hospice, psychiatric, school districts, and child development centers in Sweetwater, Cisco, Ranger Breckenridge, Merkel, Abilene and surrounding areas.
- Students participate in a variety of valuable direct patient care clinical learning experiences.
- Students practice in the skills lab and demonstrate basic competency prior to providing hands-on care in the clinical setting.
- Student assignments correlate to student learning needs identified in the course syllabi.
- The clinical evaluation tools include formative and summative evaluations throughout the program for clinical courses. These are progressive, based upon course content, and incorporate the DECs.
- If student clinical weaknesses are identified, faculty provides structured remediation activities in order to attain student success.
- Faculty provide supervision during all clinical learning experiences and BON required faculty-to-student ratios are maintained throughout the program. Preceptors are not utilized.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- The VN program is housed in the Peevee House Technology Building in Sweetwater and the Technology Building in Breckenridge. The campus is appropriately equipped and offers a rich learning environment.
- The VN director has a private office located in the nursing office suite along with the ADN program chair and faculty in Sweetwater and a private office in the Breckenridge building. All full-time faculty have fully furnished private offices in close proximity to the director.
- TSTC offers a wide variety of counseling services available to students at no charge. Faculty is able to refer a student via an online portal and the counselor will contact the student. The services include, but are not limited to, personal and family counseling, academic and vocational guidance, testing and evaluation, and various skills training.
- Each campus has a student activity fund as a financial resource for students in need.
- The facilities are spacious, include ADA compliant restrooms, a large, well-lit student lounge and break area located in the front of the building and a second smaller lounge/break area in the back of the building. Vending machines, a refrigerator, tables, chairs, couches, and a microwave oven are available. The room includes a photo booth for interactive student learning.
- TSTC has a Learning Resource Center that includes an online library of resources, databases, and services. Library holdings include current nursing books, journals, and national nursing databases such as CINAHL and MEDLINE. Reference books are available in the nursing office on the Sweetwater Campus.
- There are two classrooms that are modern, spacious, well-lit and equipped with adequate audio visual equipment (AV). One is designated solely for the VN program.
- There are two skills labs solely for the VN program. One lab has seven patient bays, with privacy curtains, each with a bed and hospital type equipment, and four adult manikins. A large supply/equipment room that includes a washer/dryer provides abundant storage space.
- The second lab contains three patient bays, each with a patient bed, an adult manikin, and hospital type equipment. Pediatric manikins are available.
• Each lab has three sinks with hot and cold running water, tables/chairs set-up for student use, storage cabinets, adequate equipment and supplies, and AV equipment.
• A full-time assistant serves as administrative and clerical support for all allied health programs. Board staff discussed this as a concern since the directors and faculty are required to assist with student registration and advising for students not yet enrolled in the program which limits their focus on program needs.

Records and Reports:
• Student and faculty files are maintained with all required documents in a locked room in locked file cabinets. All files were compliant with Board Rule 214.12 with the exception of the program director’s file.
• Official student academic records are maintained on the Sweetwater campus in the office of the Registrar.
• Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained in the locked storage cabinets.
• Clinical affiliation agreements are current.
• The Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPE) is used for decision-making as evidenced in faculty meeting minutes and documentation on the TPE.
DRAFT LETTER

July 25, 2019

Marchelle Taylor, BSN, RN, Director
TSTC Vocational Nursing
300 Homer K. Taylor Dr.
Sweetwater, Texas 79556

Dear Ms. Taylor:

At the July 25-26, 2019 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the survey visit to the Texas State Technical College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Sweetwater, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit conducted on May 29-30, 2019 and impose the requirements and recommendations as indicated in the attached Board Order.

A Requirement is a mandatory criteria based upon program assessment directly related to the rules that must be addressed in the manner prescribed.

A Recommendation is a suggestion based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which a program must respond but in a method of their choosing.

If you have any questions, or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board Staff at beverly.skloss@bon.texas.gov or 512-318-3219.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director

Copy:  Rick Denbow, Provost
In the Matter of
Texas State Technical College
Vocational Nursing Education Program
In Sweetwater, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on July 25, 2019, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas to consider the report of the May 29-30, 2019 survey visit to Texas State Technical College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Sweetwater, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214, based upon compliance with Rule 214.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby ACCEPTS the report of the survey visit to Texas State Technical College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Sweetwater, Texas, and hereby imposes the following requirements and recommendations:

Requirements:

1. The administration shall develop a nursing faculty development plan that will encourage and assist faculty members to meet the nursing program’s needs as well as individual faculty members’ professional development needs and submit the plan to Board staff no later than December 1, 2019.

2. The administration shall develop an action plan to provide adequate secretarial and clerical assistance to meet the needs of the program and submit the plan to Board Staff no later than December 1, 2019.

Recommendation:

1. It is recommended that administration and nursing faculty discuss a satisfactory teaching arrangement that will allow time for administrative work and activities related to the teaching-learning process. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than December 1, 2019.

Entered this 25th day of July, 2019

_______________________________
Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director
On behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing