

THE COOPERATING TEACHER

The cooperating teacher is the person with whom student teachers interact the most during the semester of student teaching. The cooperating teacher provides day-to-day guidance and mentoring of the student teacher. In addition, the university expects the cooperating teacher to help determine whether or not the student teacher is eligible for teacher certification. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has identified specific state requirements for colleges and universities to follow when selecting cooperating teachers for the placement of student teachers. Specific *state requirements* are as follows:

- ◆ Have at least three years of teaching experience: one of which is in the district to which the teacher candidate is assigned.
- ◆ Have a teaching assignment appropriate to the subject competency of the teacher candidate.
- ◆ Have completed a program of preparation on observation and evaluation skills developed by the college or university.

The State System of Higher Education has also determined specific university requirements for the selection of cooperating teachers for the student based upon the *Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) Standards for Field Experience in Teacher Education*, which were adopted by the Delegate Assembly in 1999. A copy of those standards is included in the appendix of this paper. Specific *university requirements* are as follows:

- ◆ Evidence of exemplary teaching performance.
- ◆ Demonstrates ability to fairly and accurately assess and evaluate student teachers.
- ◆ Support for the university's teacher certification program.
- ◆ Willingness to participate in university training for cooperating teachers.

Evidence of Exemplary Teaching Performance:

- ◆ Each teacher candidate works under the direct guidance of a school-based educator who is able to serve as a professional role model, mentor, coach, and evaluator, **(Indicator: Standard III)**.
- ◆ School-based teacher educators are selected based on experience, quality of instruction, and other relevant qualifications and will be collaboratively chosen by campus based educators and school administrators, **(Indicator: Standard III)**.
- ◆ Program objectives and assessment are well articulated, **(Indicator: Standard III)**.

Demonstrates Ability to Fairly and Accurately Assess Student Teachers:

- ◆ The program provides resources for giving feedback to teacher candidates, **(Indicator: Standard VI)**.
- ◆ The campus and the school-based teacher educators have opportunities to confer on their assessments of the pre-service teacher's performance, **(Indicator: Standard VI)**.
- ◆ Performance-based feedback and assessment procedures incorporate multiple procedures such as professional portfolios, self-assessment, and peer-assessment, **(Indicator: Standard VI)**.

Support for University Teacher Certification Program:

- ◆ Campus and school-based teacher educators work together in developing the field experience program, **(Indicator: Standard II)**.
- ◆ Both campus and school-based teacher educators feel ownership of the field experience program and work on issues and problems together, **(Indicator: Standard II)**.
- ◆ Clinical learning interaction is aligned with specific teacher education program outcomes, **(Indicator: Standard V)**.

- ◆ Campus and school-based teacher educators hold compatible views and philosophies about teaching and learning, **(Indicator: Standard IX)**.
- ◆ Stakeholders are aware of benefits of P-12 students resulting from having teacher candidates in their classrooms, **(Indicator: Standard X)**.
- ◆ Administrators, teachers, students, and parents in the school setting want to have teacher candidates in their schools and classrooms, **(Indicator: Standard X)**.

Participation in Collaborative Effects for Program Development:

- ◆ Collaboration takes place among school and campus administrators, teacher education faculty, and teachers, **(Indicator: Standard II)**.
- ◆ Decisions concerning the field experience program are made collaboratively, **(Indicator: Standard II)**.
- ◆ Campus-based teacher educators collaboratively develop and review program evaluations, **(Indicator: Standard II)**.
- ◆ The quality of interaction among teacher candidates, school-based teacher educators, and campus-based teacher educators forms a professional learning community, **(Indicator: Standard VII)**.
- ◆ The content of campus-based education is modeled in school-based field experiences, **(Indicator: Standard IX)**.

Willingness to Participate in University Training for Cooperating Teachers:

- ◆ Procedures for communication are well articulated, ongoing and consistent, **(Indicator: Standard II)**.
- ◆ Regular communication occurs frequently among constituent groups, **(Indicator: Standard II)**.
- ◆ The program has a procedure for identifying problems, which involved campus and school-based teacher educators, in addressing the problem, **(Indicator: Standard II)**.
- ◆ The program conducts collaborative research and applies it to program improvement, **(Indicator: Standard II)**.
- ◆ School-based teacher educators are provided written guidelines and teacher development opportunities, **(Indicator: Standard III)**.
- ◆ The experience is designed with regularly schedule times for conferences among the teacher candidate, school-based teacher educator, and campus-based teacher educator, **(Indicator: Standard VI)**.
- ◆ Teacher candidates, school-based teacher educator, and campus-based teacher educators communicate with each other in some way at least once a week, **(Indicator: Standard VII)**.
- ◆ Educational changes in schools are studied in teacher education, **(Indicator: Standard IX)**.