



March 2022

Utilizing Tomorrow's Hires, Today: Supporting & Sustaining Meaningful Student Teaching and Fieldwork Experiences

The SDE recognizes that districts are facing unprecedented challenges in ensuring adequate staffing to meet the needs of students. As a result, we have created the following guidelines for utilizing student teacher and fieldwork candidates.

School districts may be hesitant to accept teacher candidates for student teaching or fieldwork experiences because they are perceived as an added responsibility for already overburdened teachers and administrators. However, supporting student teaching and other fieldwork experiences for teachers in training is vital to ensuring the state's pipeline of highly qualified, certified teachers now and into the future.

Teacher candidates in training can help alleviate teacher shortages. Research indicates that student teachers are more likely to teach in your district after they complete their preparation programs and are more likely to remain in your district longer than other hires. A study showed that [40%](#) of newly hired

teachers were hired into the district where they student taught.

Student teachers and fieldwork candidates are assets in school buildings across the state, supporting teachers, students, and district efforts while honing their own professional practice. Evidence shows that students are more engaged and achievement improves when a student teacher is in the classroom. Teacher candidates can support student learning by serving in a variety of roles (e.g., tutoring one-on-one; facilitating small group instruction, etc.).

Through partnerships between districts and educator preparation providers (EPPs), we can reimagine how best to structure student teaching placements and fieldwork experiences to address student needs within the district and improve teacher preparation.

Below we list just some of the ways that teacher candidates serve as assets in their student teaching and fieldwork experiences, both in person and virtually.

Considerations and Best Practices for Using Clinical Candidates as Substitutes

Graduate Student Interns: In collaboration with the EPP, Graduate Student Interns may be broadly used as substitute teachers. Interns should be compensated as substitutes if a compensation structure is not already in place.

Student Teachers: Connecticut [Regulations](#) require a minimum of 10 weeks of full-time continuous student teaching with a trained cooperating teacher to be eligible for certification. Many EPPs require more than the minimum number of weeks required for student teaching. If a district wishes to use a student teacher as a substitute, the following considerations must be in place in collaboration with the EPP:

- Student teacher must have already completed the minimum of 10 weeks full-time student teaching in the approved placement and have already completed edTPA.
- University supervisor and cooperating teacher should verify that the teacher candidate has been

successful in the placement and has seen sufficient evidence that the teacher candidate is ready to assume full responsibility for their own class.

- Cooperating teacher should continue to mentor the student teacher and the university supervisor should continue supporting and evaluating the student teacher.
- Student teacher should continue to complete any student teaching and seminar requirements.

Undergraduate Clinical Candidates: Depending on candidate availability, undergraduate candidates can be used as substitutes provided the district completes the Bureau's streamlined [Substitute Authorization Process](#).



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Teacher in Training, Promising Practices

Teacher candidates can assist in multiple ways:

- Assist in locating and setting up technology and online tools
 - Modify instructional materials and assessments for online delivery
 - Post materials online for students and families
 - Develop short videos on focus topics or read-alouds
 - Create support resources for lessons
 - Monitor small groups either in class or online
 - Assist the cooperating teacher with monitoring two simultaneous classes — one in person and one online
 - Modify lessons for individual student needs and translation instructions for ELs, special ed., or bilingual students
 - Provide support to students who need additional support
- Provide small group instruction to reteach or fill in gaps
 - Conduct one-on-one meetings as well as small groups
 - Grade work and give feedback on student assignments
 - Teach small group lessons designed to assess prior learning
 - Serve as a virtual/remote tutors

Additionally, districts may utilize fieldwork candidates more broadly within their buildings by assigning candidates to grade-level teams or school buildings rather than to a single teacher, allowing the candidate time to be used flexibly to assist target students. Encouraging opportunities to implement team teaching and co-teaching approaches yields great results for teachers, candidates in training, and students.

Resources

Addressing Shortages of Educators in an Uncertain COVID-19 Landscape: Viewing Teacher Candidates as Assets

<https://gtlcenter.org/products-resources/addressing-shortages-educators-uncertain-covid-19-landscape-viewing-teacher>

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2019-20/April-7-2020-FERPA-and-Privacy-Memo.pdf?la=en>

https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource_document/file/FERPA%20%20Virtual%20Learning%20032020_FINAL.pdf

https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource_document/file/FERPAandVirtualLearning.pdf

[Microsoft Word - WP Foot in the Door_Body_Draft \(09.21.2015\).docx \(caldercenter.org\)](https://caldercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Microsoft-Word-WP-Foot-in-the-Door-Body-Draft-09.21.2015.docx)

Key Reminders and Updates

Placements

In-person, hybrid and virtual placements all satisfy regulatory requirements for fieldwork experiences.

TEAM Trained Cooperating Teachers

Reminder: Student teachers may be assigned to a cooperating teacher who has not yet been trained, provided they are trained by Feb. 15 for the spring semester or Oct. 15 for the fall semester.

Diversifying the Educator Workforce

As Connecticut continues efforts to diversify the educator workforce, strong partnerships with EPPs are essential. The percentage of candidates of color enrolled in CT EPPs exceeds the 10% statewide percentage working across the state.

Connecticut Educator Preparation Program Providers are eager to build partnerships

Connecticut educator preparation providers (EPPs) are eager to build stronger relationships with districts and schools across the state in ways that are mutually beneficial. We encourage districts to expand and enhance existing partnerships with EPPs and to consider exploring the development of new partnerships. For those districts looking to get started, we encourage you to reach out to programs within your geographic region or contact our partners at The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Connecticut (AACTE-CT).

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Certification/Educator-Preparation-Providers-EPPs-and-Programs-in-Connecticut>

<https://aacte-ct.org/>