

August 2024

Dear Mentor Teacher,

Thank you for agreeing to mentor a teacher candidate in Special Education this semester. Clemson University (CU) could not grow the profession without you graciously sharing your expertise and classroom with an aspiring special educator during the Special Education Field Experience.

The Special Education Field Experience is linked to the undergraduate methods coursework required for a degree in Special Education. This means the teacher candidate will be in your classroom and working with you and your students each morning, Monday – Thursday, 8:00-11:00am. The candidate will travel to Clemson’s campus following the field experience to attend courses beginning at 12:30pm. In addition to the campus coursework each afternoon Monday-Thursday and placement in the field experience with you as their Cooperating Teacher, candidates will attend seminars in Special Education on select Tuesday evenings this semester.

The teacher candidate is required to observe, teach lessons, and implement course projects assigned from his/her methods courses (e.g., curriculum-based measurement project, behavior change project, data collection activities and instruction). There is no expectation that s/he "fully take over" your classroom this semester. Under your guidance, the candidate should have a substantial instructional role within your classroom providing an opportunity for frequent, formal observation and assessment of his/her instructional performance and progress toward meeting the standards of an effective teacher. Evaluations will include informal and formal assessment of the candidate’s preparation, implementation, and evaluation of specific activities consistent with the *Specialized Professional Association Standards of the Council for Exceptional Children* (CEC-SPA). Meeting the CEC-SPA is required for accreditation purposes by the CU College of Education. In fact, the Special Education Field Experience activities consistently meet or exceed those standards, in part, because of your mentorship.

The candidate is expected to begin the field experience in your classroom on **Monday, August 26** and continue through **Thursday, December 5**, excluding CU Fall Break, October 14-15, Election Day (November 5), and Thanksgiving Break, November 25-28. They will strictly adhere to the Field Experience attendance schedule Monday-Thursday, **August 26** through **December 5, 2024**. The candidate is required to arrive at your school and be prepared before the beginning of the school day (at least 15 minutes before the official start of 8:00am) and be present in your classroom until 11:00am (Monday - Thursday). The candidate will contact you by email by **August 23th**.

Your responsibilities as a Cooperating Teacher include:

- Please put the candidate to work as soon as possible. I expect him/her to be actively engaged under your direction and planning and supervising instructional and noninstructional activities within the first few days.
- Please assist the candidate in completing the *13-Week Plan* during the two weeks of placement (due **September 6**) that will define his/her instructional and non-instructional responsibilities during the practicum experience.
- Please assist the candidate in completing the *Weekly Lesson Plan*. The student will submit the *Weekly Plan* each Friday (beginning **September 6th**) at 5:00pm. The *Weekly Plan* will help him/her detail your expectations and his/her role in your classroom during the upcoming week.
- Please complete three formal observation assessments using the *Mentor Teacher Checklist #1 and #2* before **October 9** and *Mentor Teacher Checklist #3* before **November 22** (checklists are attached and worth 30 points each). The observation checklists will provide formal assessment and feedback to the CU student from you this semester. Students must provide you with a structured lesson plan before you observe them teach and a write a post-observation conference analysis to uploaded to our course management system.
- Please facilitate the selection and secure parent permission for your student(s) to participate in a behavior change project and a curriculum-based measurement assignment. The University Supervisor and Course Instructors use these assignments to evaluate the CU student's competence in collecting and analyzing data and proposing educational activities. EDSP 4960 students are responsible for observing the confidentiality of classroom students and ensuring that the assignment's products contain **NO identifying classroom/student information**.
- Please assist the CU student in planning and scheduling **four** formal classroom observations by the University Supervisor. The University Supervisor will assess the CU student for evidence of planning, instructional and behavior management, professionalism, and maintaining positive relationships within the classroom. Our students will need your help to arrange enough time to deliver lessons and to meet with the supervisor in a post-observation conference location (approximately 20-30 minutes following the observation). You are invited to attend the post observation if your schedule permits.
- Please include the CU student in any staff development opportunities in your school or district (IEP meetings, initial placement meetings, re-evaluation meetings, etc.). The CU student will be responsible for completing and reflecting on several professional development activities.

You will find the observation forms on the website. I would also like to schedule a virtual meeting with you and the teaching candidate in the 1-2 weeks. Please contact me with any concerns or questions that arise this semester. I appreciate your willingness to work with our students.

Sincerely,

Name

Email