



Teacher Licensure Programs

Action • Reflection • Knowledge

August 17, 2023

Student Teaching Authorization Agreement

This agreement between the school district and Minot State University concerns a student teaching placement, which will occur under the teaching authorization signed by Governor Burgum in August of 2023. The guidelines put out by NDCEL provide important guidance for this process and can be found at the bottom of this letter.

1. A Minot State University (MSU) student teacher is allowed to be the teacher of record during a student teaching placement, provided that the following steps are taken:
 - a. An interested district must contact MSU's Teacher Advisement and Field Placement (TAFP) to begin the process.
 - b. The interested school district must agree to pay the student teacher as a long term substitute teacher for the length of the placement, so that issues of professional insurance are satisfied.
 - c. Once it has been determined that a potential student teacher, who meets the qualifications required for the authorization, is available and interested, the school district, the TAFP office, and the teacher candidate's advisor will determine:
 1. The advisor's approval for the placement

2. The existence of a qualified and available mentor/collaborating teacher willing to complete MSU's required student teaching paperwork (based on observation of the student teacher)
 3. Principal (or other administrator) availability to provide micro-observations, at least one formal observation evaluation, and other ongoing support for the student teacher
 4. The existence of a qualified and available university supervisor willing to complete MSU's required student teaching paperwork (based on observation of the student teacher)
- d. The school district must then send a letter to the Director of ESPB indicating that they were unable to find a fully qualified teacher AND that they have a qualified and available on-site mentor/collaborating teacher.
 - e. MSU's TAFP office will then send the student teacher's satisfactory practicum evaluation and a letter to ESPB, indicating that the student teacher qualifies for the authorization and what the metrics for that qualification are.
 - f. MSU students will be required to send an unofficial copy of their transcripts to ESPB as well to verify that the student teacher has completed ALL coursework required for the BSE degree in their field/major.
 - g. Once the school district, the TAFP office, and the student teacher have finished the tasks listed above, the student teacher will be placed in the district at the grade level requested by the school and the mentor/collaborating teacher and university supervisor will also be assigned.

General Guidance for Using Teaching Authorization Flexibility NDCEL

Key Roles:

ESPB - The Education Standards and Practice Board provides the license, which is called a pre-service teacher authorization.

Note: The license programming likely will not be ready before August 24, so the proposed pre-service teacher may need a substitute teacher license to begin the school year. ESPB will be drafting a letter to all districts updating the process and will keep a record of all pre-service teachers and the districts they serve.

Higher Ed - The university system has an existing rubric in place to approve alternate access candidates. They will use this existing process and must approve that pre-service teacher before they are allowed to be considered for the pre-service authorization license. Institutions of Higher Ed will also still provide the supervision process as they would for any student teacher.

District - A recognition must exist that it will cost more to support a pre-service teacher than a typical first-year teacher. Districts that opt for this flexibility must recognize that pre-service teachers, while able to be teachers of record through this emergency measure, are not yet fully licensed teachers. As such, the district should commit to providing an experience that, while different from the student teaching experience, still replicates the same outcomes.

Building Principal - The building principal will be primarily responsible for the implementation, management, and progress monitoring of all strategies utilized to support the pre-service teacher. The involvement of the building principal is critical to the success of the pre-service teacher.

Steps for Utilizing Pre-Service Flexibility

Step 1: Candidate Eligibility – A district considering utilizing pre-service flexibility must first contact a university to ask if they have a potential candidate who meets the qualifications to be considered as a pre-service authorization. The school district should interview the potential pre-service teacher to determine if they are a fit for the position, level, and school. If both the district and university wish to continue, the institution of higher education must issue approval for pre-authorization to ESPB.

Step 2: District Request for Pre-Service Authorization - The school district must write a letter to ESPB to express that they are unable to fill that position and to request the pre-service teacher. A letter should include evidence of the length of posting the vacancy or the emergent issue resulting in the request to use a pre-service authorization.

Step 3: Individualized Training Plan – It is recommended that any district utilizing a pre-service authorization create an individualized training plan that addresses the specific needs of that pre-service teacher in the areas of: 1) Classroom Strategies and Behaviors, 2) Planning and Preparing, 3) Reflecting on Teaching, and 4) Collegiality and Professionalism. The best plan will be created when the pre-service teacher is consulted and his/her specific needs are considered as opposed to a standardized template for all pre-service teachers. The district should also audit existing resources and determine which new resources will be needed to fulfill the individualized training plan.

Recommendations for Districts

Compensation:

The most reasonable model for compensation is to follow your district's practice on long-term substitute until the completion of the education program and conferral of degree. In most, if not all cases, the pre-service teacher could then be offered a contract after January 1. As a reminder,

contracts after January 1 do not hold continuing contract rights. We do NOT recommend offering them a regular teacher contract.

Communication:

It will be best practice to engage in an open dialogue with your local education association regarding expectations, rationale, process, supports that will be provided, and compensation. There will certainly be some questions and reasonable concerns from your existing teaching staff. Be open to their concerns and suggestions for improvement. They are likely your best resources in the development of a plan to support pre-service teachers.

It will also be important to gauge school board and community support for utilizing pre-service teachers. Explaining other instances in which pre-service teaching already exists, such as alternate access, permits, and alternate pathways, as well as an explanation of how an individualized training plan will be put in place may help to cultivate support and address any concerns.

District Mentorship:

The individualized training plan should include specific responsibilities for mentorship. While the established cooperating teacher will enact some of these responsibilities, others will need to be filled by other professionals. This may include instructional coaches, building principals, paid in-district mentor, outside of district mentoring program, retired teacher, or other strategy to provide regular support to the pre-service teacher.

Professional Leave:

The individualized training plan should include specific opportunities for pre-service teachers to observe other teachers. Ideally, this includes structured learning walks that allow for dialogue with veteran teachers and administrators.

Observations and Evaluations:

The individualized training plan should include a minimum number of observations, ideally weekly, from the building principal that includes actionable feedback. Additionally, building principals should plan on a formal evaluation schedule that, at minimum, aligns with the NDCC requirements for first-year teachers.

Administrative Considerations:

Any district considering the use of a pre-service teacher should first determine the capacity and desire to fully support the pre-service teacher beyond what exists for a first-year teacher.

Administrators are also cautioned to consider which staff members are being asked to support and that they be qualified and supportive, but also not already overburdened with existing responsibilities.

Exit Requirements from Teacher Education

Although the university allows candidates to graduate using the catalog under which they were admitted, those in Teacher Education are obligated to meet Teacher Education program requirements in effect at the time of their graduation due to ESPB administrative rules.

Exit requirements from Teacher Education are as follows:

- Successful completion of all coursework outlined by the Teacher Education Administrative Council and the major department (no grade below a “C” in required Professional Sequence courses).

- Successful completion of student teaching including required documentation.
- Passing the Praxis I CASE exams, and attempting the PRAXIS II and PLT exams.
- Formal application for graduation.

Licensure

The Head of the Teacher Licensure Programs recommends licensure based on the candidate meeting the guidelines established by the Education Standards and Practices Board of North Dakota.