Field Placement Plan
Master of Arts in Teaching Program (MAT)
School of Education, University of Puget Sound
Spring 2024

Mandate

PESB approved teacher preparation program providers, including alternative route, traditional route, and Plan 1 and Plan 2 CTE teacher programs, must develop a plan describing how the program(s) will partner with school districts for field placement of teacher candidates. The school districts in the plan may be either in the general geographic region of the program or interested in partnering with the program. This is described in RCW 28B.10.033.

The program must:

- Develop the plan in collaboration with school districts desiring to partner with the program;
- Consider field placement of student teachers targeting high-need subject areas (e.g., special education or English language learner) and high need geographic areas (e.g., Title I and rural schools), and incorporate this in the plan as appropriate for the program and districts;
- Consider highly effective mentors, evidenced by those who have received at least a level 3 on criteria 3 and 6 of their Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Growth Program (TPEP), and those who have received or are receiving professional development in mentoring skills; and incorporate this in the plan as appropriate for the program and districts.

Context

The M.A.T program at the University of Puget Sound is a graduate program within a small undergraduate liberal arts university. The large bulk of our school-based placements take place in the Tacoma Public School District. We also work with a variety of local districts neighboring Tacoma. For the purposes of this field placement plan, we identify the Tacoma School District (TPS) as our primary district, as approximately 75-85% of our candidates are placed in TPS for student teaching. We identify all other districts as secondary districts, because together they provide far fewer placements, with each individual district placing less than 4 candidates per year, often 1-2 candidates per year.

Primary Partner District: Tacoma

Secondary Partner Districts: Bethel, Clover Park, Fife, Franklin Pierce, Peninsula, Puyallup, University Place

- We are committed to teacher education taking place in the context of urban schools with a rich diversity of students and the presence of Title 1 schools.
- Our candidates are split generally evenly between elementary and secondary candidates.
- We support the following nine endorsement areas: Biology, Chemistry, elementary education, English Language Arts, Math, Music, Science, Social Studies, and History. Each year, we have a small number of STEM candidates, typically less than five.
- We are not approved to provide endorsements in either ELL or Special Education.
- Our placement process in partner districts currently involves the following:
    - our program provides names of suggested mentors to the school district placement coordinator or Human Resource director; in some cases, we request ideas from the

district; we make requests based on the candidates' endorsement area, and keeping in mind candidates' personal interests as well as driving distance to the placement;
    - the placement coordinator reviews the suggested mentors in relation to those approved by school principals based on a holistic evaluation of teacher quality; in some cases the district will suggest or offer mentors for us to consider;
    - we mutually agree on the placement before formally confirming with the candidate; sometimes an interview or meeting between mentor and candidate is required before the placement is finalized;
    - if a placement is not possible, we will move on to another district.

Field Placement Plan

To meet the requirements for Field Placement plans set out in House Bill 1139, we have divided the plan into a two-year cycle.

For Year 1 (2024-2025), we will:

- *Review our two most recent years of student teaching placements in relation to high demand areas (special education, ELL, STEM, Title 1). We will evaluate our placement practices in light of PESB criteria (high need areas and mentor quality).

- Invite our Professional Education Advisory Board (PEAB) to review field placement data and our drafted field placement plan in light of PESB criteria. We will focus on the underlying questions: How can we best support high quality school-based placements in high need areas? How do you determine mentor teacher quality?

- Reach out to the Human Resource director of our primary district partner TPS to discuss placement needs and ways of supporting high demand areas. We will share PESB criteria around field placement plans and invite input on how mentor teachers are selected, including the role of TPEP scores in mentor selection. We will focus on the underlying questions: How can we best support high quality school-based placements in high need areas? How do you determine mentor teacher quality?

For Year 2 (2025-2026), we will:

- Review our two most recent years of student teaching placements in relation to high demand areas (special education, ELL, STEM, Title 1).

- Reach out to the Human Resource directors of our secondary districts either by written communication, phone or virtual communication, or in person. We will share PESB criteria around field placement plans in relation to high demand areas and mentor quality and invite districts to clarify high demand areas and needs for student teachers. We will ask districts to share how mentor teachers are selected, including the role of TPEP scores in mentor selection. Focus will be on the underlying questions: How can we best support high quality school-based placements in high need areas? How do you determine mentor teacher quality?

**see data from 2022-2024 below*

Student Teaching Placements

	2022-2023 Total Candidates: 27	*2023-2024 Total Candidates: 14*	*Total Total Candidates:*
	Primary District Partner: Tacoma Public Schools		
STEM Placements	*7%* *(2/27)*	*0%* *(0/14)*	*5%* *(2/41)*
Placements in Title 1 Schools	*44%* *(12/27)*	*57%* *(8/14)*	*49%* *(20/41)*
	Secondary District Partners		
STEM Placements	*4%* *(1/27)*	*0%* *(0/14)*	*2%* *(1/41)*
Placements in Title 1 Schools	*0%* *(0/27)*	*7%* *(1/14)*	*2%* *(1/41)*

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GOOGLE FORM RESPONSES

1. In terms of school district personnel, with whom do you work most closely to place your candidates?
Human Resources personnel.

2. How do you typically communicate with district partners to place your candidates? What modalities? Standing meetings?
Email and phone communications where we put forth requests and districts then process the requests. With our primary district partner (Tacoma Public Schools) we hold a meeting to discuss the details of each placement and then consistently communicate with our district partner via email through the placement process.

3. What structures does your program have in place to scaffold candidate placements? For instance, trainings, Q&A sessions, resource documents, forms, etc.
We host two orientations for MAT candidates, once at the beginning of the year for teacher candidates and once at mid-year, in January, for mentors and teacher candidates. MAT candidates are also enrolled in a seminar-based course on campus throughout the entirety of their student teaching. This seminar serves as support, coaching and guidance throughout their internship. It also provides instructional and professional scaffolding for their teaching practice. Candidates also received consistent and thorough guidance with a faculty appointed field supervisor throughout their internship. This field supervisor provides extensive one on one coaching, support and resources.

4. How does your program identify qualified mentors and supervisors?
In order to identify qualified mentors, in many cases we propose the names of selected mentors to the district and then work with the district on the best placement. Districts make the final decision for each placement. We determine qualified mentors through our long-standing experience partnering with districts, working in local schools and classrooms, and having hundreds of our alumni working in local districts. We also survey MAT students every year at the end of their internships, asking them to assess their placements and their experiences working with their mentors. We take these student assessments into account as we make future placements. Specific parameters for Tacoma Public Schools, the primary district we place in, include these qualifications for mentors (as highlighted in our Memorandum of Understanding with the district):

A. The MT will meet the following qualifications:

   a. Be highly qualified as addressed in WAC 181-78A-220 and willing and capable of mentoring Candidates.

   b. Be fully certificated school personnel and have a minimum of three years full-time teaching experience as per WAC 181-78A-236(2)(e).

   c. Hold certification for the area in which they are teaching and in which the Candidates will be endorsed and assigned.

   d. Be interested in supervising pre-service Candidates as part of their responsibility to the profession.

e. Be a strong communicator and work as an effective team member with the administration and University Intern Coordinator ("UIC") or College/University.

f. Have mentoring and/or coaching skills and be strong communicators and committed to spending time with Candidates in planning and evaluation.

g. Be sensitive to, and appreciative of, all student's exceptionalities and ethnic, cultural, and language diversities.

h. Be sensitive to the needs of a beginning teacher, such as the need to experiment with teaching techniques suggested by College/University.

5. What role/responsibilities does each person fulfill in a candidate placement? (Mentor teacher, supervisor, principal, candidate, advisor, etc.)
Roles and responsibilities for mentoring and supervision are detailed in our mentor handbook and explained in our mentor orientation materials.

6. Are candidate preferences considered in the placement process? If so, how?
Prior to the start of each year a survey is sent to in-coming MAT students asking their preferences for: grade level, subject, interest, location preferences and transport options. Candidate responses are considered as we recommend placements, however the primary consideration when making placements is mentor quality and alignment with program goals. By administering this survey and relying closely on responses we pay close attention to needs of students as they prepare for their internships. Placements are also regularly assessed during faculty meetings and through consistent faculty/student conversation. Our faculty are field supervisors. There is a consistent and solid connection to and oversight of students as they work through their internships.

7. How are expectations communicated to each person involved in candidate placements? (Mentor teacher, supervisor, principal, candidate)
We hold two orientations for candidates—one prior to the Fall practicum and one prior to student teaching. During student teaching candidates attend a weekly seminar where expectations are discussed with Clinical Instructors. We also hold a mentor teacher orientation in early January, prior to the start of the full-time student teaching internship. In all of these orientations we instruct all persons involved in the placements the importance of the MAT as Professional Standards that we have set in the program.

8. How are evaluations conducted and collected over the course of the field experiences?
<u>Fall Placement Evaluations</u> (early December)
Supervisors and mentors fill out a placement evaluation for each candidate through Qualtrix survey at the end of the fall placement. The Office Coordinator will provide a survey link to supervisors and mentor teachers.

Student Teaching Midterm Evaluation (March)

- Supervisors and mentors evaluate candidates using the School of Education Student Teaching Evaluation Form.
- Candidates also fill out the form for self-evaluation.
- A meeting is held at the school to discuss the evaluation and provide formative feedback.

Student Teaching Final Evaluation (May)

- Supervisors provide a summative evaluation for individual candidates using the School of Education Student Teaching Evaluation Form, via Qualtrix survey.
- Supervisors send a link to the student teaching form to mentors via email at the end of the term.
- Mentors provide a summative evaluation for individual candidates using the School of Education student teaching evaluation form, via Qualtrix survey.
- All evaluation information is submitted directly to the Certification Officer/Data Administrator.

Click here to see the evaluation tools:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UxDuPKymdTJgLu7g2zCPauSV1gERs3qN/edit

9. What opportunities exist for providing feedback before, during, and after the placement?
Candidates provide feedback about their placements in regular meetings with Clinical Instructors. In the fall, supervisors conduct on-going informal observation and verbal discussion debriefs after classroom observations. These observation experiences are also discussed and analyzed in seminar coursework. When possible, mentor teachers participate in these observation-debriefs. In the spring field supervisors and mentor teachers conduct on-going formal observations of the teacher candidates, with pre-observe communication around student needs, foci and developed lesson plans. Post-observation supervisors, mentors and teacher candidates engage in a formal discussion with extensive written document of the observation. All written documentation is shared with the teacher candidate after the debrief. At the completion of the placement, candidates provide a rating and written feedback about the placement.

10. What are the communicated expectations for handling critical conversations within candidate placements? What preparation or training does each person receive prior to or during placements to scaffold critical conversations? What other support does the program provide related to critical conversations?

Our small program size facilitates close relationships and active regular communication with candidates and mentors. We are able to work individually with candidates through challenging moments and to support them through crucial conversations. In our university-based course work, having critical conversations is a core part of our program and is embedded in goals, curriculum and classroom practice. These practices include naming community agreements, specifically: Call In/Call Out: Call in to foster deeper reflection and to support the group to question together. Call Out to let people know their words are causing harm; Prioritize Impact over Intention; and Notice and Lean into Discomfort & Adopt a Learner Stance.

During their full-time teaching internship teacher candidates participate in a weekly reflection seminar at the university in which they participate in a Critical Friends Group model of peer feedback

and reflection on placement-based challenges. In this format students are able to share, problem solve and reflect in a small group, peer setting. Faculty also participate in these small group circles, taking the role primarily as observers but can interject when valuable and necessary.

Field supervisors, who are all also faculty in the MAT program, engage in critical conversation training using resources such as Elena Aguilar's Coaching for Equity and Seeking Equity and Diversity-SEED. Having a full -time clinical supervisor means we have high engagement with mentor teachers and intervene when the need for a critical conversation emerges. We scaffold and support critical conversations through modeling and participation. Faculty also engage in regular discussion on best practices around productive, equity-centered conversation practices during faculty meetings.