STUDENT TEACHING AND FIELD EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

I. STUDENT TEACHER GUIDELINES

Student Teacher Candidates will be assigned in the Cherokee County School District (CCSD) under the direction of a Cooperating Teacher, as approved in advance by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in cooperation with the approved college/university and Principal.

A. Cooperating Teacher Applicants

- Current CCSD teachers who are interested in serving as Cooperating Teachers for Student Teacher Candidates must complete a Cooperating Teacher Request Form to be considered for Fall/Spring placement.

- A Principal’s recommendation of a Cooperating Teacher is required prior to approval of a Student Teacher/Internship candidate’s placement with the Cooperating Teacher.

- A list of approved Cooperating Teachers will be maintained by the OPM.

- The OPM will work with the appropriate college/university to assign all approved Student Teacher Candidates.

B. Placement of Student Teacher Candidates from Colleges/Universities

Student Teacher Candidates from colleges/universities with current CCSD Partnership Agreements referencing Student Teaching/Internships will receive priority consideration for placement. Students from other colleges/universities with CCSD memoranda of understanding/agreements may be considered; but their placement will be contingent upon availability and prior OPM approval. Students from colleges/universities who do not have a CCSD partnership or CCSD memoranda of understanding/agreement must complete a Request for Student Teacher Placement Form.

C. Criminal History Check

A Criminal History Check form must be completed prior to commencement of any Student Teaching/Internship experience. The OPM reserves the right to reject the request of any candidate who does not meet CCSD minimum criminal history requirements.

D. Placement of Student Teacher Candidates Who Are Employees

The OPM will strive to accommodate requests for Student Teacher placements made by CCSD employees, in accordance with established OPM guidelines (included).

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II. FIELD EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

Field Experience Candidates from colleges and universities with current CCSD Partnership Agreements referencing field experiences (i.e., classroom observations and/or any required field experience that may occur prior to student teaching/final internship.) will receive priority consideration for placement. Students from other colleges/universities may be considered; but, their assignment is contingent upon availability and prior OPM authorization. Students from colleges/universities who do not have a CCSD partnership must complete a Field Experience Request Form. A letter from the college/university detailing a description of the student’s field observation must be attached to the request form. The OPM will work with appropriate Principals to assign approved candidates in this regard.

III. PROFESSIONAL LEAVE GUIDELINES FOR CCSD EMPLOYEE STUDENT TEACHING/INTERNSHIP

A. Eligibility

An authorized leave of absence, for the purpose of completing Student Teaching requirements to attain teaching certification, may be granted to an employee who has completed five consecutive years of satisfactory regular full-time CCSD service. All such leave of absence requests must be approved in advance by the OPM.

Candidates shall be chosen for such approved professional leave on the basis of years of service, quality of past performance, relevancy of planned study to the CCSD educational program and date of application. Student Teaching placement shall typically be made by the OPM at a site different from the employee’s current work location; and participants will not be compensated during such placement.

Such leave shall be granted for a period up to 16 weeks and shall not be granted to the same individual more than once.

Employees Who Do Not Meet Eligibility Requirements

An employee who does not meet the eligibility requirements for an authorized leave of absence for the purpose of completing Student Teaching may qualify for placement provided the employee has completed two consecutive years of satisfactory service, and is seeking placement in a teaching field deemed by the OPM as a critical shortage area. In the event a placement is granted, the employee must resign from his/her assignment prior to the commencement of Student Teaching, and must reapply for employment with the Cherokee County School District.

B. Procedure for Requesting Leave

- The employee will notify the immediate supervisor in writing of the desire to be considered for such leave at least 90 calendar days prior to the date on which the leave would be scheduled to begin.

- Such notice shall include the following:
  - Statement of the purpose of the leave;
  - Timeframe involved/reported;
  - Name of fully accredited institution of higher learning where the study will take place;
- Field of specialization;
- Proof of admission to the program; and,
- Letter from program advisor outlining the approved program of study.

C. Maintaining Leave Status

If, at any time during the student teaching experience, the college/university reports/indicates unsatisfactory performance, such leave may be terminated by the OPM immediately.

D. Returning From Leave

Upon completion/expiration of the approved leave and upon presentation of documentation to the OPM demonstrating satisfactory completion of the course of study, such employee will be returned to the same or equivalent position the employee held immediately prior to the leave of absence. If an equivalent position is offered to the employee and said position is refused, the District will have no further obligation to reinstate the employee.

Except as a result of documented illness or incapacity, failure to devote the entire period of leave to the purpose for which leave was granted shall constitute grounds for forfeiture of reinstatement rights.

E. Employee Benefits While On Leave

While accumulated vacation leave, if applicable, may be used during the period of an approved leave of absence in this regard, vacation and sick leave benefits do not continue to accrue during such leave.

Employees on such approved leave continue to have employee/dependent insurance coverage and all other Board approved benefits; however, the employee is responsible for paying health (and other) insurance premiums for continuation of coverage during the period of leave in accordance with established CCSD rates and guidelines.