

Graduate School of Education
Curriculum & Instruction

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December, 2012

Dear Cooperating Teacher Colleagues,

Thank you for agreeing to mentor a pre-service teacher from the secondary cohort at Portland State University. Your role is essential to the development of our teachers' instructional skills. We are the cohort leaders for your student teacher and share responsibility for coursework and advising. As former secondary teachers and school administrators with an average of 20 years of public school experience, a professional highlight for us was working with student teachers.

This letter provides you with an overall picture of our students' work in the schools as well as university courses, and gives a timeframe for those activities. Earlier this fall we met with many of you to introduce ourselves as the cohort leaders and to acquaint you with the GTEP program. However, if your student teacher is only working with you winter term because he or she has two authorization levels (middle school and high school), we may not have been able to schedule a visit. Your student teacher has a university supervisor who will meet with you and make a minimum of three supervisory visits during Student Teaching I (winter).

In addition to the standard GTEP curriculum, each cohort of students engages in practices, in and out of classrooms, to become an effective learning community. A learning community is one in which participants are actively engaged in learning with and from each other through examination of practice, collaboration in planning of instruction, analyzing data, and dialogue. Our students' goal is to become reflective practitioners and professionals who continue to incorporate new learning into their day-to-day work with students.

Our GTEP students will spend increasing amounts of time participating and learning with and from you over the course of the program. As the year continues, less university coursework will be required. During fall quarter, pre-service teachers took a full load of courses on campus and completed an initial field experience of at least 90 hours observation at one of their placements.

The winter term 2013 includes Student Teaching I (half-time) for 20 hours per week. Students who are earning two levels of authorization (e.g., middle and high school) or two subject area endorsements (e.g., language arts and social studies) will spend winter term with you and then move to their second placement in the spring. However, students who are earning one subject area in high school or middle school only will teach in your classroom both winter and spring terms. During winter term students are also taking classes at PSU half-time on Wednesdays starting at 4:00 PM and Thursday afternoons starting at 2:00 PM.

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Your student teacher will begin formal Student Teaching on January 7. Student teachers complete a three to five week work sample during winter term on a topic and with a class that is mutually agreeable. **To ensure timely completion of the work sample we are recommending that our student teachers complete their instruction of the work sample by late February.** In general student teachers continue to teach in two of your classes until the end of winter quarter on March 22. They should be writing lesson plans for each day of teaching.

The spring term 2013 involves our teacher candidates in Student Teaching II (full-time), and they will be expected to be at the school site 40 hours per week. In addition they have a university class on Thursday evenings beginning at 4:00.

To ensure a successful student teaching experience for all concerned, we need to receive timely, periodic reports on each student's progress. During winter and spring terms there will be two Student Teaching Evaluation forms to complete with the university supervisor and the student teacher (mid-term and final). If there is ever a problem with a student teacher we would like to know sooner rather than later, as we are all working toward the same goal—the success of each member of our PSU/GTEP cohort.

Thank you for your support and tireless service in helping to educate young people. We have included our contact information to facilitate communication.

Sincerely,



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