

# PARTNER TEACHER HANDBOOK



Educators as Architects of Change  
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# A MESSAGE TO PARTNER TEACHERS FROM OUR DEAN

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Dear Principals and Partner Teachers:

Let me begin by expressing my sincere thanks for your work in preparing the next generation of teachers. The College of Education's programs are nationally ranked and each member of our faculty is dedicated to guiding students along a pathway of excellence so that they are well-prepared and ready to teach from day one. Your work as Principals and Partner Teachers is critical in ensuring that each and every graduate of our programs will be professional in his or her role, knowledgeable concerning content and students, collegial and prepared for the challenges they will face throughout their careers.

In this handbook, you will find the policies and procedures that guide our programs as related to field placements and the role of Partner Teachers. Please take some time to review this manual so that

you are aware of expectations as a Principal hosting our candidates or as a Partner Teacher who is mentoring and guiding a Teacher Candidate.

Should you have a question that is not covered in this handbook, or need clarification, please do not hesitate to contact our Director of Partnerships and Placements Mrs. Claire Garrett ([claire.garrett@gcsu.edu](mailto:claire.garrett@gcsu.edu); 478-445-6205) or me ([joseph.peters@gcsu.edu](mailto:joseph.peters@gcsu.edu); 478-445-2518).

Again, thank you for your support. We appreciate your commitment to the teaching profession.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joseph Peters  
Dean of Education



# OVERVIEW OF THE MENTOR-LED, FIELD-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

The mentor-led, field-based teacher education program of the John H. Lounsbury College of Education of Georgia College (JHL COE) has enjoyed a long history as one of Georgia's most celebrated teacher preparation programs. Teacher Candidates (TCs) inherit a tradition of excellence that is recognized throughout the Southeast.

Our teacher education program is solidly grounded in the guidelines of nationally recognized professional organizations and is fully accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The NCATE accreditation certifies that the JHL COE teacher education program meets or exceeds its rigorous standards of excellence. Our program is also fully approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). The initial teacher education programs are nationally recognized by the following organizations: Early Childhood Education is recognized by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); Middle Grades Education is recognized by the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE); and Special Education is recognized by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

The rationale for our program and the guiding principles that drive it are derived from our Conceptual Framework, a comprehensive statement of the vision of the JHL COE to assume a leadership role in America's colleges and universities. More particularly, the Conceptual Framework details the plans of Georgia College to enhance our role as "Architects of Change," preparing teachers to improve the current state of education by collaborating with all stakeholders to solve problems creatively and to set the course for future trends in

education. In essence, the Conceptual Framework identifies and explores the following core concepts: a foundation in liberal arts, a foundation in professional preparation, a foundation for addressing human relations and diversity issues, the development of dynamic leadership abilities, the differences in undergraduate and graduate programs and the solid foundation provided by the various components of the teacher education programs.

The Conceptual Framework of the JHL COE demonstrates a clear picture of the philosophy, guiding principles and organizational structure that have been interwoven in the preparation of our TCs as teachers for the future and as "Architects of Change."

## What is a Field-Based Program and What are its Benefits?

All of our programs for initial certification are field-based, which means that our TCs spend numerous hours in a variety of diverse schools before graduation. The GaPSC is the licensing agency in the state and sets the minimum requirements of TCs in field placement settings. These varied settings provide the opportunity for TCs to have field experiences that are sequenced, increasing in complexity until the final semester with an internship where the TC becomes the primary instructor. The field placements and internship provide an opportunity for TCs and Partner Teachers to co-plan, co-teach, and co-assess as the Partner Teacher guides and supports the learning of the TC. The Master of Arts in Teaching Program (MAT), which offers initial certification for candidates with an earned bachelor's degree, also places teacher candidates in schools for a significant amount of time.



## Click here for Ga PSC Rules

The benefits of experiencing a variety of school settings and having extensive exposure to hundreds of learners from diverse populations are numerous. Teacher Candidates draw from each aspect of their experiences to create their own understandings of the demands, challenges and rewards of teaching. They see many different teachers working with learners of various cultures, ages, and abilities in schools that vary in climate, location, and administrative philosophy.

Our TCs' have a wealth of experiences and opportunities for inquiry and reflection. These experiences with Mentor Leaders and Partner Teachers, with the liberal arts philosophy, and practices in pedagogy and technology creates a group of new teachers that will meet the needs of diverse students in 21st century America.

## Who are Partner Teachers?

Many Partner Teachers wonder what the designation means and what it will entail for them as they take on the role. This handbook is written to help clarify the expectations and responsibilities associated with serving in this role.

Partner Teachers **model** their ability to reflect upon their teaching and help to make explicit for the TC the many variables that affect decision-making. This does not mean that Partner Teachers have everything "right." In fact, effective Partner Teachers are well aware that they will continually refine their practice in response to student interests, ability levels and data collected. Effective Partner Teachers understand TCs are not necessarily to mimic the Partner Teacher's practices, even when practices are successful, but the TCs are encouraged to engage in inquiry themselves.

A Partner Teacher is a **coach** who both encourages TCs as they work to achieve goals, and holds them accountable for reaching those goals. The Partner Teacher would likely be involved in helping TCs set those goals and together, they would engage in

frequent and regular dialogue about the goals. Observed behaviors would be recorded and become the basis for evaluations made of the TC. The Partner Teacher needs to be able to discern what approach is necessary and communicate the appropriate feedback whether it is praise or constructive criticism.

A Partner Teacher is a **collaborator** with the TC. In this collaborative relationship, the knowledge and skills of each is valued and significant in teaching the P-12 students. The process of collaboration changes throughout the experience as teaching roles shift. Contributions of each individual help to create ownership, responsibility and success. Because they are collaborators, the Partner Teacher should refrain from correcting the TC in front of students unless absolutely necessary.

A Partner Teacher is a **leader** who is committed to the improvement of the profession of education. Time and talents are given to assist in inducting new professional educators into the field in a positive and encouraging way that pays respect to teaching as career and promotes the education profession.

## How are Field Placements Made?

Undergraduate TCs in the JHL COE spend 1300 - 1600 hours in field experiences, including their internship. Field placements and internships are made in school systems in which the COE has a formalized partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Teacher Candidates are placed in schools by the Partnership and Field Placement Director with guidance from the Mentor Leaders and school administrators. The exact nature of field placements depends upon whether the TC is a junior, senior, or graduate student.

Junior TCs have three to four field placements through the academic year; seniors begin with the pre-planning experience and have a single placement in the fall semester with a student teaching internship during their final semester. Secondary MAT TCs may be enrolled in a one-year or two-year program that requires two to four semesters of field-based experiences.

Placements are made in specific grade level settings and/or content areas to meet the GaPSC's requirements for TCs.

- For early childhood education programs (P-5), field experiences are required in three grade levels: PK-K, 1-3 and 4-5.
- For middle grades education programs, field experiences are required in two grade levels: 4-5 and 6-8.
- For programs leading to P-12 certification, such as special education, art, and world languages, field experiences are required in four grade levels: PK-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12.
- For secondary education programs (6-12) field experiences are required in two grade levels: 6-8 and 9-12.

## Who are Mentor Leaders and What do they Do?

Mentor Leaders are members of the faculty of Georgia College who teach, coach and supervise the members of their cohort of TCs. The Mentor Leaders and their cohorts work together for up to two years. The Mentor Leader works with the Partnership and Field Placement Director and school administrators to decide how TCs are paired with Partner Teachers. In addition, Mentor Leaders work with university supervisors to assess the TC's performance during the placement, confer with the Partner Teachers and award a grade to the TC's field experience.

Because some online MAT programs are created to allow for more student flexibility in course enrollment and degree completion, the professor and/or university supervisor provide(s) candidate support.

# What is Expected of our Teacher Candidates?

Teacher Candidates in the JHL COE teacher preparation cohorts are emerging professionals. As such, we expect them to conduct themselves with dignity, decorum and consummate professionalism. While they are still Teacher Candidates and entitled to make the kinds of mistakes we all made as novices, the TCs have been carefully selected and have been exceptionally well-prepared to enter teaching. All TCs in the JHL COE, whatever their area of certification, share the following expectations:

## PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Teacher Candidates are:

- expected to conduct themselves as welcomed guests and professional colleagues in the public school, and as such to be observant of the same rules, regulations and expectations that all professional educators in the public school observe.
- expected to sign in and out every time they enter or leave the school. They are also expected to be on time and to stay until the specified time every day unless a variation is pre-approved by the Mentor Leader and/or Partner Teacher.
- expected to notify the Partner Teacher, Mentor Leader and University Supervisor as early as possible before the school day begins if they must be absent. Make-up hours will be assigned by the Mentor Leader and approved by the Partner Teacher, as well as the school administrator if necessary.
- expected to dress professionally, following the dress code specified by the administrator for the faculty in the school of placement. When in doubt, TCs should comply with a dressier, rather than more casual, standard.
- expected to inquire about and follow the school's policies for use of copy machines, laminators, computers and other types of instructional equipment.
- not to use the school's telephone, computers or fax machines for personal business.
- not to use their cell phones for non-instructional purposes during school hours.
- not to smoke, including e-cigarettes, on school premises.
- expected to direct their Partner Teachers to the JHL COE webpage and to the link for the Partner Teacher Handbook on the first day of each placement.
- expected to achieve satisfactory field-based experience evaluations during each placement in order to continue in the program.
- The state of Georgia requires that a certified teacher or substitute teacher be available to supervise a TC's classroom performance.
- expected to adhere to the Georgia Code of Ethics.

## GA CODE OF ETHICS.

## PERSONAL INTERACTIONS

Teacher Candidates are:

- expected to establish and maintain proper and cordial relationships with all school personnel, learning names and responsibilities to the degree allowed by circumstances.
- expected to establish and maintain proper professional relationships with students and students' families or caretakers.
- expected to avoid inappropriate language or conduct in the school setting and at any school-sponsored function.

## TEACHING DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Teacher Candidates are:

- expected to honor the confidentiality of information about students' grades, test scores, disciplinary records or any other personal information.
- expected to seek prior approval for any learning activities they implement.



## TEACHING DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUED

Teacher Candidates are:

- expected to learn and follow guidelines and practices used by the Partner Teacher for classroom management. Any modifications need to be discussed with the Partner Teacher.
- expected to seek the level of involvement expected by the university instructor, but with the full cooperation of the Partner Teacher.
- expected to provide the Partner Teacher with timely and complete information about tasks assigned by university instructors to be carried out in the field placements.
- expected to take the initiative in making their placements successful and getting the most out of each new learning experience.
- expected to be observant of opportunities to be useful in the Partner Teacher's classroom and to volunteer her services as needed.
- required to take the content based GACE assessment to graduate.

# PARTNER TEACHING GUIDELINES

## AN ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME

- Provide a separate desk or space, a chair, a name card, student handbook, class roll, etc.
- Add the TC's name under yours outside the classroom.
- Prepare your students for the TC's arrival, making sure they know the TC is an authority figure and must be treated with the same respect shown to you. Be mindful of the TC's blossoming sense of authority; please take care not to undermine the TC in front of the students.
- Introduce the TC to each class, allowing a few minutes for them to tell about themselves.
- Take the TC on a tour of the school, pointing out key locations and introducing the TC to others.
- Provide copies of textbooks, faculty handbooks, etc.
- Discuss expectations for arrival and departure times, dress, do's and don'ts, copy machine policies, parking, etc.
- Give the TC one or more duties within the classroom from the first day.

## A PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP

- Explain the decision-making process in classroom practices as you go, so the TC can begin to gain insights.
- Ask the TC open-ended questions about the observation of the teaching that is occurring to prompt analysis and stimulate creativity.
- Include the TC in planning sessions, parent conferences, student support team meetings, etc.
- Share materials and ideas. Let the TC make a copy of your best lesson plans, handouts, bulletin board files, parent letters, classroom rules, etc. Try to remember what it was like to be a beginner!

## RULES AND POLICY GUIDANCE

- Whenever the opportunity arises, make references to school policies, district rules or laws that affect decisions.
- Caution the TC about the demands of confidentiality and the legal liabilities that might be encountered as a result of breaching confidential information.

- Monitor comments for indiscretions. Avoid unprofessional characterizations of students, their parents, colleagues or superiors.
- Caution the TC about establishing and maintaining appropriate relations with students and avoiding even the appearance of impropriety.

## INFLUENCING THE TEACHER CANDIDATE

- Model the behavior that is expected.
- Set clear expectations for planning, materials, and evaluation. Point out what you are doing as you go.
- Plan with the TC and the Mentor Leader the gradual assumption of responsibilities based on the TC's performance and experience.
- Create the kind of climate in the classroom in which experimentation and mistakes are acceptable.
- Share advice and constructive feedback.
- Fill out the TC's evaluations in a way that honestly reflects the performance. Every TC is not expected to perform at an excellent or even proficient level at all times in every placement, especially in the beginning. Honest feedback will allow the Mentor Leader and the TC the opportunity to track growth and improvement.
- Review any teaching evaluations with the TC after they have reflected on their teaching. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable doing this, communicate this concern with the Mentor Leader and/or university supervisor that is supervising the TC.
- Encourage the TC to be reflective about their professional growth as an educator.
- Increase feedback as the TC assumes more responsibility.
- Accentuate the positive! However, do not withhold important information that could be useful to the TC because you are afraid it might be discouraging.
- Congratulate yourself for influencing the future in a powerful way!

# EVALUATION OF TEACHER CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE

The assessment of TCs, both formative and summative, is a very important responsibility of the Partner Teacher. This feedback supports the professional growth of the TC and promotes meaningful reflection over their development. One of the forms of assessment that will be completed by the Partner Teacher is the teaching observation. You will be asked to complete several formal teaching observations of the TC whom you are mentoring. You will evaluate the effectiveness of the lesson and provide comments based on a TC's performance in that specific lesson. It is recommended that after the lesson is taught, the TC reflects on that teaching, and you provide feedback, that you engage in dialogue with the TC to discuss the effectiveness of the lesson in supporting student achievement and to encourage the TC to share their perspectives of their performance

In addition to feedback provided through teaching observations, you will be asked to complete formative assessments provided to you by the TC. These assessments are more holistic in nature, seeking observable information based on a TC's willingness to take initiative, build rapport with students, uphold professional standards, demonstrate content knowledge, ethics and so on. Please ask your TC to provide information regarding all assessments to be completed during their time in your classroom.

In addition to the assessments mentioned above, the JHL COE seeks to learn more about the growth of the teacher candidates across the college. In an effort to gather this information so that we can involve ourselves in continuous improvement, we evaluate all JHL COE TCs on two assessments: 1.) Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAPS); and 2.) Professional Behaviors and Disposition Assessment (PBDA).

## CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE (CAPS)

This formative assessment is used to evaluate candidate performance in the areas of professional knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and professional responsibility. Teacher Candidates, Partner Teachers, and University Supervisors/Mentor Leaders will collaborate (in person, by phone, or online), and the University Supervisor/Mentor Leader will record CAP ratings in LiveText. For MAT candidates who are in the field, University Supervisors/Mentor Leaders should review and consider the school-based TAPS evaluation ratings for each candidate.

## PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS AND DISPOSITION ASSESSMENT (PBDA)

This assessment will be included in the LiveText FEM account that you are provided as a Partner Teacher. This assessment is intended to measure candidate dispositions that are critical in effective teaching, learning, and the exercise of professional responsibility.

As with all assessments, it is critical that the Partner Teacher take into account the developmental nature of the teacher candidate. However, in order to best guide and nurture the development, Partner Teachers must accept the professional responsibility to be honest and forthright with TCs in their performance. Your critical feedback is essential in fostering reflection within the TC as a lifelong disposition of a professional in the education field.

As with all assessments, it is critical that the Partner Teacher take into account the developmental nature of a pre-service teacher. However, in order to best guide and nurture this development, Partner Teachers must accept the professional responsibility to be honest and forthright with TCs in their performance. Your critical feedback is essential in fostering reflection within the TC as a lifelong disposition of a professional in the field of education.

If you have questions regarding these assessments, please contact the TC's Mentor Leader.



# COMMON QUESTIONS OF PARTNER TEACHERS

## What if there are concerns about the Teacher Candidate's performance?

Georgia College's COE prides itself on preparing TCs who are ready to teach before their actual student teaching internship in their final semester. During their first three semesters of field experience, TCs have many opportunities to practice their skills, try out the techniques and strategies they've seen modeled for them and create a few of their own.

Occasionally, once the formal student teaching opportunity arrives, TCs will encounter difficulties in various aspects of their performance. It is at this point that you, the Partner Teacher, become most valuable and that you and the Mentor Leader can work together to intervene and ease the TC through the difficulty and onward toward a promising career. When you first notice that the TC is not progressing as quickly as you would like, try the following strategies:

- If there are several areas of concern, concentrate on just one or two of them (example: "Today I will be watching to see if you state the objective of your lesson before you begin" or "Today I'll be watching to see if you have the students' attention before you begin.")
- For problem areas of performance, clarify your expectations with specific directions (example: "I expect you to stand at the door as students enter, direct them to their seats, make eye contact and have them begin the activity you have written on the board. As you give those directions, move and speak with authority as you circulate among the students. Mentally take the roll as you walk and begin your introductory remarks.")
- Document any resolved OR unresolved matters on the TC's evaluation form.
- After a lesson, ask the TC to reflect on what was taught and explain how it can be modified the next time.
- Share your own experience in the area of concern.
- Provide resources you might have that could improve the TC's performance.

- Ask the TC to observe you and some of your colleagues who have mastered the area of concern and to take notes of specific strategies used to avoid the problem being addressed. Review these observations with the TC soon after the lesson and give an opportunity to practice the new behavior soon.
- Have the TC videotape themselves and review it together, letting them take the lead in critiquing it.
- If necessary, reduce the overall teaching responsibilities for a predetermined amount of time so that your TC can concentrate on the problem areas.

## PROCEDURE FOR CONCERNs

## What if the candidate is stronger, better prepared than usual and essentially ready to teach when they arrive?

We often find that the extensive field experience of our TCs equips them so well for the classroom that they are "ready to teach" prior to their internship experience. In that case, you may want to consult with the Mentor Leader and/or university supervisor and move the TC into more responsibility quickly and into a variety of enriching activities. Some suggestions are as follows:

- Accelerate the schedule described in the timeline you received for the student teaching (internship) semester.
- Help the TC find new ways to meet students' individual needs.
- Encourage the TC to assume additional extracurricular activities (parent conferences, book fairs, etc.).
- Ask the TC to observe other teachers who have areas of expertise that would be helpful.
- Encourage the TC to attend professional meetings or conferences.
- Share a thought-provoking professional book or journal article.
- Help the TC compile files of ideas, articles, lesson plans, bulletin boards ideas, etc.

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