



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Hardy County Schools & Shepherd University Educator Preparation Program

Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding outlines the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the partnership between the Hardy County Schools (HCS) and Shepherd University, through its Educator Preparation Program (SU EPP). The MOU will serve to ensure high-quality clinical experiences for pre-service teachers that lead to their professional development and positive impacts on P-12 student learning and development. The purpose of the partnership established herein is to combine the resources of HCS and the SU EPP to improve teacher education for both teacher candidates and in-service teachers as well as to increase P-12 student achievement. This partnership should provide opportunities for teacher candidates, in-service teachers, school administrators, HCS personnel, and SU EPP faculty to observe, teach, collaborate, analyze, and reflect on best practices.

This document shall serve as the formal written agreement between the Shepherd University EPP and HCS and will be placed on file with the WV Department of Education (WVDE).

SU EPP Mission

The Shepherd University Educator Preparation Program (EPP) utilizes data-driven instruction to prepare reflective, effective, and socially responsible teachers to meet the diverse needs of P-12 students. Rooted in learning, engagement, integrity, accessibility, service, and community, we cultivate innovative educators who apply research-based strategies, foster inclusive learning environments, and promote success for all students. Through rigorous coursework and immersive field experiences with community partners, we prepare our teacher candidates to be empowered educators who seek continuous improvement and lead in dynamic educational settings.

MOU Rationale

As SU EPP students prepare to become prospective P-12 classroom teachers, the partnership established herein shall provide them with real-life experiences in which to participate to learn the art and science of pedagogy in authentic classrooms under the direction of master teachers, from various pre-clinical field-based experiences (e.g., EDUC 150, 200, 320, 358, 370, etc.) and extending into their final clinical practicum (ST/Residency). HCS will benefit from the candidates' help and from the collaborative professional relationships that result between HCS professionals and SU EPP faculty. The partnership will support all stakeholders in improving the academic performance of P-12 students.

Placements for the Final Clinical Experience

Teacher candidates practice their pedagogical skills under the supervision of the HCS master teacher(s) and SU EPP university supervisor(s) during their final practicum experience. Student teaching and/or the Yearlong Residency is the final phase of field experiences in which the teacher candidate must demonstrate readiness for graduation and eligibility for licensure.

The traditional student teaching placement consists of one or more placements for a period of 7-8 hours per day across five days per week for a minimum of 14 weeks to total at least 500 hours. Currently, only candidates within secondary specializations and/or MAT candidates complete a traditional one-semester student teaching placement; all elementary candidates are currently completing yearlong residency experiences.

[NOTE: Beginning in 2024, all entering freshman in secondary programs must complete a yearlong residency for their final practicum.]

The Yearlong Residency placement consists of two full semesters. The first semester (Res I) involves one placement in which the candidate spends a minimum of 14 weeks for a minimum of 250 hours and a subsequent semester in which the candidate spends five full days per week across a minimum of 14 weeks for a minimum of 500 hours. *[NOTE: The second semester assignment may or may not occur in the same classroom as Res I.]*

Teacher candidates are responsible for observing, planning, and executing lessons on a daily basis as well as for assessing student learning using the Co-Teaching Model established by the WVDE and implemented across the SU EPP. Teacher candidates, in collaboration with their mentor teachers, must complete other responsibilities as assigned in the classroom. They must also notify their assigned classroom teachers prior to their scheduled appearance if illness or other unavoidable circumstances make attendance impossible.

Roles & Responsibilities

Educator Preparation Program (EPP)

The SU EPP will:

- Provide a liaison to coordinate with the partnering county board of education and school(s) (e.g., Coordinator for EPP/Accreditation & Compliance; Field Placement Coordinator).
- Outline and offer services and assistance to support the partnership, including supervision of pre-service teachers, guidance on EPP-required assessments and initiatives, and professional development initiatives as determined beneficial by both parties.
- Meet CAEP and WVDE standards and will comply with the expectations of WVDE policy and P-12 standards.
- Ensure that faculty and/or university supervisors become knowledgeable of HCS curriculum and content standards in order to support teacher candidates as they work in HCS.

County Board of Education & School(s)

The county board of education or school(s) will provide:

- Access to appropriate placement sites for pre-service teachers as outlined herein.
- Access to technology and eligible systems necessary for effective teaching and learning as outlined by WVBE Policy 5100.
- Opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in professional activities such as student instruction, committee memberships, and meetings, as permitted by privacy laws and county regulations.
- Memorandum of Understanding between the SU EPP and HCS Board of Education and Participating School(s)
- Feasible support for onsite meetings and/or instruction of pre-service teachers, including methods courses and co-teaching collaborations with a college supervisor as outlined by WVDE Policy 5100.
- The HCS Board of Education or school(s) will include [EPP] faculty and staff in professional learning opportunities that enhance their ability to prepare future teachers as outlined by WVBE Policy 5100.

Building Principal

Each building principal is responsible for the administration of the educational programs in the school, including the supervision of all teacher candidates' field and practicum experiences occurring in their school building. The principal assists in the selection of master teachers/mentors working with all teacher candidates and ensures that candidates will not serve in the capacity of substitute teachers (except as allowed by Policy 5202 for Residency II candidates with the appropriate certification/licensure). The building principal will further ensure similar access to ST/Res II candidates during their final practicum as is afforded to their cooperating teachers/mentors to the school building, resources, and assigned classroom(s) where they are placed, as outlined in WVBE Policy 5100. Ensuring both timely access to buildings/assigned classroom(s) and access to all necessary resources is essential for ST/Res II candidates to begin and carry out their duties without unnecessary delays or added stress.

Cooperating/Facilitating Teachers

Classroom teachers serve as mentors to teacher candidates in the various field-based (pre-clinical) and final (clinical) experiences described above. Teachers serving as mentors should have the dispositions and expertise to facilitate the candidate's development as an effective teacher. The cooperating teacher must meet the requirements established by the State of West Virginia (WVBE), the local school district, and the SU Educator Preparation Program [EPP] (see here as needed). These requirements include (but may not be limited to):

WVBE Minimum Requirements (See WVBE Policy 5100 "Governing Statutes" below.)

- Possessing a bachelor's degree and a professional license in the associated specialization area.
- Successful completion of a minimum of five years' professional teaching in the field and at the level for which they are assigned.
- Evidence of successful performance with a summative rating of "Accomplished" or better during the previous two years of employment.
- Successful completion of WVBE-approved mentor/induction coaching course at no cost OR hold and/or be eligible for the Master Mentor Advanced Credential OR hold certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

SU EPP Minimum Requirements (See Practicum Manual)

- An expressed interest in mentoring teacher candidates / prospective future educators.
- Willingness to participate in the educational process and to share knowledge, skills, talents, and activities with the teacher candidate.
- Expressing interest and active participation in professional organizations and associations.
- Recommendation to participate from the building principal or other appropriate school district official.
- Willingness to become familiar with and supportive of the philosophy, theme, and practices of the SU EPP.
- Commitment to provide the teacher candidate with guidance in the use of confidential materials concerning individual P-12 students.
- Commitment to discussing problem situations that arise with the teacher candidate's work with the student, the university supervisor, and building principal. **NOTE: Removal of a teacher candidate from a placement must adhere to the SU EPP's established Withdrawal Procedures as described in the "Appendix" below.**
- Commitment to completing formal evaluations of the teacher candidate's performance and conferencing with the teacher candidate to provide formative as well as informal feedback on a regular basis.

**The Governing Statutes for Cooperating Teachers working with candidates in the State of West Virginia
(Policy 5100):**

"5.12.a. Effective July 1, 2018, cooperating teachers for clinical experience shall, at a minimum: 1) hold a valid West Virginia five-year teaching credential in the content area of the candidate placed in their classrooms with a minimum of three years of teaching experience; 2) hold Accomplished or higher as a summative performance rating on the West Virginia Educator Evaluation during the last two years of employment; and 3) have successfully completed a WVBE-approved cooperating teacher course, at no cost to the teacher, or hold certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

5.13. Cooperating Teacher (Out-of-State). Shall: 1) hold a valid teaching credential beyond the initial license and in the content area of the candidate placed in the candidate's classroom and in the state of the placement; 2) have a minimum of five years of teaching experience or 3-4 years of teaching experience accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the pre-k-12 building administrator; and 3) provide evidence of successful performance (such as educator evaluations) during the last two-years of employment or hold certification through the NBPTS. A cooperating teacher who meets all requirements except the experience requirement may submit an exception request to the WVDE."

EPP Advisory Council / Governance

The Educator Program Provider Advisory Council (EPPAC) meets biannually to discuss and review policy implementation and programmatic needs (W.Va.§5100:10.1). Representatives from all stakeholders (public school administrators and classroom teachers, SU personnel, community college partners, and teacher candidates) are essential partners within the EPPAC at Shepherd University. **Therefore, it is essential that representatives from HCS attend both meetings each year of the EPPAC at Shepherd University** (W.Va.§5100:6.3.a.5).


NOTICE: Any Board of Education outside the State of West Virginia may add requirements in addition to those outlined herein by including an Addendum to this agreement. However, the EPP at Shepherd University is governed by the policies established by the WV Department of Education, the WV Board of Education, and the SU EPP Council as outlined herein. Therefore, the minimum requirements included within this MOU shall be maintained by the SU EPP and its faculty, students, and administration, in addition to any further requirements proposed by the individual County BOE and/or its Legal Counsel and subsequently approved by the Shepherd University legal counsel.

Duration and Termination

This MOU will remain in effect for five (5) years, with an option for renewal upon mutual agreement. Either party may terminate the agreement with 90 days' written notice, if termination does not disrupt the completion of field and/or clinical experiences for currently placed teacher candidates.

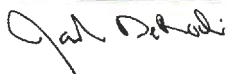


WITNESS, The signatures of the duly authorized officers of the parties to this Agreement.



Mary J.C. Hendrix, Ph.D.
President / Shepherd University

Date: 8-26-2025



Jack DeRochi, Ph.D.
Provost / Shepherd University

Date: 8/25/2025



Teresa D. Kepner, M.A.Ed., M.S.Ed.
Coordinator of EPP/Accreditation & Compliance / Shepherd University

Date: 8/12/2025



Sheena Van Meter
Superintendent / Hardy County Schools

Date: 8/12/2025



Belinda Mitchell, Ph.D.
Director, School of Education / Shepherd University

Date: 8.17.25

Appendix

SU EPP FIELD PLACEMENT/PRACTICUM WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES **(As outlined in the SU EPP Practicum Manual)**

Voluntary Withdrawal:

Teacher candidates have the right to terminate their field placements at any time. The candidate's responsibilities:

- Provide written notification to school/district and SU personnel of decision and reason(s) for withdrawal.
- Withdraw from SU course, if applicable.
- Return any materials, records, and/or keys to school personnel.
 - NOTE: Teacher candidate may be evaluated by the Educator Preparation Program Council [EPPC] for future retention in Educator Preparation Program [EPP].

Involuntary Withdrawal:

Teacher candidates may be removed from practicum placement under any of the following circumstances:

- 1. Formal request by public school administrator and/or facilitating/cooperating teacher to terminate placement.**

ACTION:

- Termination is immediate.
- Teacher candidate shall be informed of decision by university personnel.
 - NOTE: Teacher candidate shall be evaluated by the Educator Preparation Program Council [EPPC] for future retention in the Educator Preparation Program [EPP].

- 2. Teacher candidate does not demonstrate an acceptable level of competence and/or behavior as evidenced by:**

- Negative evaluations by public school and/or university personnel; and/or
- Requests by public school personnel for additional support and/or re-evaluation of candidate's ability; and/or
- Misrepresentation of time spent in the field/practicum classroom setting on submitted Log of Hours.

ACTION:

- Candidate shall be informed in writing of inadequate performance and/or inappropriate behavior by school/district and/or university personnel.
 - Candidate shall be given an opportunity to correct deficiencies, if applicable and appropriate, within a given time period. Additional supervision may be provided.
 - Candidate will be re-evaluated for retention or removal.
 - Removal requires written notification and justification by the CEPAC.
 - NOTE: Teacher candidate shall be evaluated by the Educator Preparation Program Council [EPPC] for future retention in the Educator Preparation Program [EPP].

For access to Shepherd University School of Education Resources, including all policies governing the SU EPP including candidates' field/clinical practicums, visit: <https://www.shepherd.edu/education/resources>