

MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY

A GUIDE FOR EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCES

**A pre-student teaching handbook for ALL
Education Majors, including Undergraduate Students
And Post-Baccalaureate Certification Students**

**OFFICE OF EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCES
MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY
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Revised, Spring 2016

QUICK REFERENCE

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Early Field Experience Office(717) 871-5752
University Professor #1
University Professor #2
Cooperating Teacher #1
School Office #1

NOTE: Those numbers not given above must be obtained from professor, cooperating teacher, and school. ALWAYS check with your co-op and professor regarding proper procedure and permission to call the person at home.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

Early Field Experience Office <http://www.millersville.edu/earlyfieldexp/>
Millersville University..... <http://www.millersville.edu>
School Website #1

Early Field Experience Fax #(717) 871-7945

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

Millersville University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action institution. Coordinators: Services for Students with Disabilities – Mrs. Sherlynn Bessick, Director, Office of Learning Services, Lyle Hall, 717-872-3178; Title VI and Title IX – Mr. Hiram Martinez, Assistant to the President for Social Equity and Diversity, Delaware House, 717-872-3787; ADA Coordinator – Ms. Melanie DeSantis, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, Dilworth Building, 717-872-3017.

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PREFACE

All early field experiences are developed in conjunction with a University course from a number of education majors, and as such, expectations for the field experience are developed and evaluated by the instructor of the course. It is the University's hope that Early Field Experiences will provide a multi-cultural exposure for our teacher candidates in a variety of settings (urban, suburban, and rural). This handbook has been prepared by the Early Field Experiences Office to give teacher candidates an overview of the field experience. Specific, individual questions about the field experience should be directed to the student's University professor. In this booklet Millersville University students participating in field experiences are referred to as *teacher candidates*. The term *students* refers to children in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade receiving instruction from teachers or teacher candidates. *Teachers* refer to individuals with the responsibility to instruct students. *Cooperating teachers* are the persons working collaboratively with Millersville University and the teacher candidates.

Students need teachers who are challenged by the intellectual demands of teaching in an age of knowledge explosion. These teachers must be caring, responsible professionals who can exercise leadership and serve as advocates for the learner. Teachers should be able to build and use knowledge, matching worthy goals, appropriate teaching methods, and learners' styles. These education professionals must be informed, reflective practitioners.

The term "field experiences" has been defined in research literature as those opportunities given to teacher candidates to visit schools, observe students and teachers, and acquire and refine the complex skills involved in teaching. The importance of Early Field Experiences (EFE) has been widely accepted and implemented. Indeed, the value of EFEs is undeniable. Many state departments of education have mandated meaningful experiences in schools prior to student teaching.

A list of benefits to all stakeholders often includes the following: first hand interaction with children that helps teacher candidates recognize their skill in coping with classroom reality, initial opportunity to practice teaching skills, and the opportunity to observe different rates of student growth. Future professionals acquire a sense of good teaching, the purposes of teaching, and the realities of teaching as they begin to develop self-confidence. Early Field Experiences provide a safe environment in which to learn and they are extremely motivating to teacher candidates as they refine their career goals.

The EFE portion of the teacher education program at Millersville University is designed to give teacher candidates practical training in the classroom. Interaction with students, teachers, and staff members in actual schools is invaluable to teacher preparation at Millersville University. Millersville arranges several field experiences during the teacher candidates' program, beginning with a freshman year experience and concluding with a minimum of two extended professional blocks prior to student teaching. Proactive and reactive classroom management and real teaching experience cannot be acquired in any environment other than an actual classroom.

Field experiences should reinforce the teacher candidate's decision to become a teacher, as well as give him/her a chance to recognize strengths and weaknesses. If through these experiences the teacher candidate should question if teaching is the right career path, he/she should seek advice from the academic advisor and others in the profession.

For more information on Early Field Experiences, see website <http://www.millersville.edu/earlyfieldexp/>

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT

COMMUNITIES OF LEARNERS

All members of the Millersville University Professional Education Unit will create learning communities of inquiry and action, focus on students, and demonstrate exemplary professional practices.

Learning Communities of Inquiry and Action	We will engage in learning communities in which reflection, collaboration, lifelong learning, and habits of mind are developed and nurtured.
Focus on Students	We will balance knowledge and the principles and concepts delineated in professional and state standards with an appreciation of all students' individuality, diversity, and cultures.
Exemplary Professional Practices	We will demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions of exemplary professionals. We will have strong competence in our content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. We will demonstrate professional dispositions or standards of conduct, will be supportive of students, families, and the school and community and will serve as catalysts for positive and responsible change.

To view the full text of the Conceptual Framework, visit the School of Education webpage at <http://www.millersville.edu/education/>.

NOTE: The term *Students* in this document and the Mission and Vision Statement refer to school-age (pre-school to grade 12) students.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCES

Teacher candidates' responsibilities for all field experiences include punctuality, ethical and professional behavior and actions, confidentiality, and adherence to Millersville University Professional dispositions, the Pennsylvania Code of Conduct (see Appendix B), and ethical practices outlined by professional organizations. It is suggested that teacher candidates take the initiative in offering assistance in all classroom activities. The greatest success can be achieved by requesting help or guidance from cooperating teachers, communicating progress to University Supervisors, getting to know the children, following school rules, and discussing any challenges or problems with their co-operating teacher or university supervisor.

The teacher candidate is a guest of the cooperating school. As a future member of the teaching profession, the teacher candidate must maintain the same professional standards expected of the teaching employees of the school. The teacher candidate should honor the classroom teacher's role as an advisor – one who will help guide his/her efforts to improve and refine the role as a future professional. The teacher candidate is recognized as a representative of Millersville University by the students, faculty, and community to which he/she is assigned, and is expected to emulate professional behavior.

An important characteristic of a successful teacher candidate is COMMITMENT. The teacher candidate needs to be attentive to detail, punctuality, and preparedness. When involved with any teaching activity, **planning** and **reflection** are important.

Millersville University students **must** conduct themselves ethically and professionally at all times.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT (see Dispositions in Appendix A and Appendix B)

The teacher candidate is urged to accept every task as a potential learning experience and to develop his/her own educational philosophy, which will be consistent with the principles of a democratic society. The following list of characteristics is expected of all teacher candidates:

- Arrive at the scheduled time every day. If for some reason the teacher candidate is absent, he/she should telephone the university supervisor and the school office as far in advance as possible to notify the cooperating teacher.
- Be well groomed and appropriately dressed. Teacher candidates must abide by rules and regulations pertaining to the chewing of gum, wearing of hats, jewelry, and other issues.
- Adhere to confidentiality regulations. If a situation of concern arises, contact your university supervisor immediately.
- Wear your Millersville University picture identification card at all times.
- Maintain your professional position by having students address you as Mr. , Miss, Ms., Mx., or Mrs.
- Develop good time-management skills. Be well prepared.

THE SUPERVISOR, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE COOPERATING TEACHER AND DIRECTOR OF FIELD SERVICES, HAS THE AUTHORITY TO CHANGE OR TERMINATE THE STUDENT'S ASSIGNMENT IF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IS NOT MAINTAINED.

ATTENDANCE

At the first meeting with the cooperating teacher, times of arrival and departure should be discussed. Each teacher candidate is expected to be in his/her assigned classroom on every day of the assignment.

A teacher candidate who is ill or has an emergency should call the cooperating teacher and University Supervisor.

- Become familiar with the local radio and TV stations that announce the closing of schools for snow and/or other emergencies.
- Be alert to special announcement regarding early dismissals, in-service days, or holiday closings. This can be checked with school office personnel.

IF A TEACHER CANDIDATE IS ABSENT FOR ANY REASON, IT IS HIS/HER RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE THE COOPERATING TEACHER HAS ANY TEACHING MATERIALS OR MANUALS WHICH THE TEACHER CANDIDATE MAY HAVE BORROWED.

DISRUPTION OF SCHOOLS

The policy of Millersville University in disruptive situations, i.e., strikes by employees or students, is to remove teacher candidates from their assignments. The teacher candidate may not return until the operation of the school is resumed on a regular basis. Should the period of disruption become extensive, the teacher candidate could be reassigned to another location.

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

A teacher candidate may not transport school students in a vehicle. This prohibition extends to field trips and overnight trips (which the teacher candidate should only attend if accompanied by the cooperating teacher).

TRANSPORTATION

Students are urged to provide their own transportation or to be a car pool driver. The Office of Field Services will make every attempt possible to provide transportation for those who do not have a personal vehicle. Car pool drivers should notify the student(s) whom they are transporting immediately when they are sick or if an emergency arises. Resident teacher candidates with less than junior status may request to have a car on campus to complete their field experiences. Please contact the University Police for more information.

TO THE FUTURE TEACHER CANDIDATE: KEY POINTS

It is the teacher candidate's responsibility to become part of the Community of Leaders in the school.

As you begin your educational program leading to a Pennsylvania teaching certificate, you need to keep several key points in mind:

1. You are required to file a negative TB test and photocopies of the following current (within one year) and satisfactory (no record exists) clearances with the Field Services Office: Act 34 (Criminal Record Check) report, Act 151 (Child Abuse History Clearance) report, and Act 114 (FBI Clearance) fingerprint check. To participate in any field experience, these clearances must indicate no infractions and must be current throughout the length of the field placement. You should maintain the original clearances. Schools may ask you to present these prior to entering the classroom.
2. Early Field Experiences are designed to help you understand teaching and yourself. Reflect upon these experiences carefully so you can be certain you have chosen the right option for your professional career. Talk to faculty and cooperating teachers about your decision to teach.
3. As a representative of Millersville University, you are expected to dress and behave as a future professional teacher. Dress codes for the various schools may differ slightly. It is suggested that male teacher candidates wear a shirt, tie, socks, and dress slacks; no jeans, t-shirts, hats, or sneakers. Female students should wear a dress, skirt, dress pants and a blouse, and low, comfortable dress shoes. Jewelry and cologne should be moderate and conform to school district policies. Several local districts prohibit visible tattoos, piercings anywhere except the ear, and open toed shoes. Millersville supports those regulations, and strongly urges students to follow them, regardless of the district in which they are placed. Even such small matters as chewing gum, texting, or talking about your college social life are inappropriate. Your role as a teacher candidate begins with these EFEs. Remember: First impressions are lasting.
4. Confidentiality is critical. You should not discuss children or school incidents when you are in other settings.
5. Teacher candidates are required to meet all Advanced Professional Studies (APS) requirements at the time designated by the major department before they enter their Professional Block and should complete certification requirements before graduation/certification. See <http://www.millersville.edu/cert/requestinfo.php> for APS requirements and <http://www.millersville.edu/cert/getting-certified-in-pa.php> for certification information.

THE COOPERATING TEACHER

The role of the teacher working with candidates in teacher education is primarily to be a role model of professionalism and best teaching practices. Host teachers must be aware of the developmental level of the teacher candidate and provide experiences that are appropriate for that level. Freshman in their first field experience will spend the majority of their time observing the students and host teacher; whereas, the junior or senior will be able to present complete lessons. All EFE activities must be performed under the supervision of a certified teacher.

Each cooperating teacher will receive information as to how to access the EFE handbook on the Early Field website and an evaluation form for the teacher candidate. The evaluation is used to assess the teacher candidate's progress and help him/her identify areas needing attention. It is suggested that the host teacher provide as many comments and/or constructive criticism as possible and to share the evaluation with the teacher candidate. Private, professional discussion is more productive than just reading over the evaluation. If you have specific questions about the evaluation form, please contact the Early Field Experiences Office or the University supervisor.

In addition, the cooperating teacher will be visited by a University Supervisor. The University Supervisor has the responsibility to provide information regarding the requirements of the teacher candidate assigned to the cooperating teacher.

Your role as an EFE cooperating teacher is one of primary importance to the success of Millersville University's teacher education program. *We sincerely thank those who serve in this capacity.*

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COOPERATING TEACHER

According to research literature, cooperating teachers are an essential component of a successful Early Field Experience program. Suggested responsibilities of cooperating teachers during EFEs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Prepare students for the arrival of the teacher candidate. Emphasize the fact that this teacher candidate will be involved with the class.
- Describe the learning context, school and community demographics and the overall goals and philosophies of the district to the teacher candidate.
- Help establish good rapport between the teacher candidate and other school personnel.
- Arrange for the teacher candidate to receive orientation to the school building, regulations, use of machines, materials, and supplies.
- Familiarize the teacher candidate with the school rules, liability provisions, referrals made for special services, holidays, parent conferences, grading, school discipline, staffing, the type of school organization and reasons for this, the duties of the department chairperson, fire drills, cafeteria procedure, and other procedural issues.
- Discuss acceptable dress for this school with the teacher candidate.
- Provide the teacher candidate with seating charts and explain the reason for this room or laboratory arrangement.
- Engage in ongoing communication about general classroom management, the schedule, and supervision of halls and lavatories.
- Explain the way the teacher candidate will function from the beginning of the assignment to the end, and assign appropriate tasks.
- Allow the teacher candidate to work first with individual students, and then gradually assume expanded, supervised responsibility.
- Acquaint the teacher candidate with technology in the school and give necessary help to insure that the student is able to use the equipment effectively.
- Communicate when possible and whenever necessary with the University Supervisor or the Early Field Experiences Office and set up definite times for conferences with the teacher candidate.

Millersville University recognizes that cooperating teachers may not have the opportunity to perform all of these responsibilities for every level of EFEs. These experiences are progressive in nature and offered with respect for the professional opinion of the cooperating teacher and the understanding of the diversity of each classroom.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

The University Supervisor promotes the expectations and requirements of his/her particular discipline. Each supervisor should have already established a professor/teacher candidate relationship through course work and other classroom experience. The EFE requirements designed for the teacher candidate are determined by the discipline and communicated through the university supervisor. University Supervisors are expected to do the following:

- Explain the Conceptual Framework, university policies, and the evaluation process.
- Clearly communicate all requirements and responsibilities of the teacher candidate to the teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher.
- Serve as an ambassador promoting university goals and procedures with the cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate.
- Provide leadership to initiate and maintain the professional relationship between the school, university and the teacher candidate.
- Communicate frequently with the cooperating teacher concerning teacher candidate progress and inform the Coordinator of Field Services of any concerns.
- Confer with the cooperating teacher about the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher candidate.
- Serve as a resource person when needed.
- Inform the cooperating teacher about the evaluation processes to be used. A copy of the current evaluation form will be provided.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY TEACHER CANDIDATES

The following is a list of possible Early Field Experience opportunities. This is only a list of POSSIBILITIES—it is not complete, nor mandatory. The possibilities are endless...

Support to the Cooperating Teacher

Assist teacher with small and large group work

Check and assist with homework

Grade tests and record grades

Locate materials to supplement units or projects

Assist teacher on field trip

Prepare bulletin boards

Care for laboratory equipment/assist with laboratory work

Help construct a test

Help with routine drills, recess, or lunch duty
(must be under the direct supervision of a certified teacher)

Support to Students

Check on individual's progress

Assist students with make-up work

Coordinate social activities

Provide individualized instruction

Listen to students read

Shadow a student in different classes

Assist with individual or group tutoring

Perform Teaching Tasks

Engage or coordinate social activities	Observe other teachers
Supervise multi media activities	Attend department, team and/or faculty meetings
Help student improve special skills	Teach a lesson or class
Help students work together harmoniously	Perform homeroom or morning assignments
Read to students	

WRITING FINAL EVALUATIONS

In some cases, the cooperating teacher evaluates the Millersville University teacher candidate during EFEs by using an “Evaluation of Early Field Experience” form. The University Supervisor reviews and signs the evaluation and forwards it to the Department to be filed.

One of the most frequently asked questions is: *Should the teacher discuss the final written evaluation with the student before it is given to the University Supervisor?*

The answer is, “yes.”

Cooperating teachers are encouraged to share their evaluations with the Millersville University teacher candidates at the time of completion. Such information is very useful to the teacher candidate for self-improvement. The teacher candidate should be asked to sign the form in the space provided, indicating that he/she has read the evaluation form.

It would be appreciated if the evaluation could be neatly typed or printed legibly in black ink.

What happens to the Early Field Experience Evaluation?

After the cooperating teacher completes the Early Field Experience evaluation and shares it with the teacher candidate, the teacher candidate returns the completed evaluation to his/her university professor. Teacher candidates should make photocopies of all evaluations before submitting them. It is advisable for teacher candidates to maintain an individual portfolio containing their own evaluations.

REQUESTED SUPPORT FROM THE BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS

Millersville University sincerely appreciates your willingness to contribute to the training and teaching experiences of our teacher candidates. Your leadership in supporting Early Field Experiences will be of vital importance to our teacher candidates as they learn the roles and responsibilities of all professional staff. With great respect for your intensive responsibility we ask that you support this experience in the following ways:

- Welcome the teacher candidate and assist him/her in the development of appropriate professional relationships with faculty, staff, students, and community.
- Help communicate the philosophy, public policy, rules and procedures of the school district.
- Communicate with Millersville University staff about the quality and quantity of Early Field Experiences.
- Ensure that all EFE activities are performed under the supervision of a certified teacher.

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCE COOPERATING TEACHERS

Is it necessary for me to observe the Millersville University teacher candidate?

Teacher candidates in EFE need your guidance and supervision. The discipline specific University supervisor will clarify teacher candidate requirements and requests for formal written observations. It is not expected that observations occur with the same intensity and frequency as with a student teacher. Performance criteria at this level is considerably less.

How can small group instruction be utilized?

A teacher candidate may plan and instruct small groups of students, estimated as 3-6 students, under the direct supervision of the cooperating teacher. Please discuss plans, methods and evaluation procedures with the teacher candidate prior to the candidate teaching the lesson.

What kinds of things are important for the teacher candidate to observe?

Teacher candidates should observe the following: environment of the classroom or laboratory; physical, social and intellectual needs of the students; daily schedule; learning climate in the classrooms or laboratories; classroom management techniques used by the teacher; and basic instructional methodology.

Should I allow Millersville University teacher candidates to have access to student files?

If school policy permits access to student files and you think it advisable, the Millersville University teacher candidate may have access, but he/she **must** honor the confidentiality of the file content.

If I have a student teacher, should I also accept an Early Field Experience student?

In fairness to the student teacher, the cooperating teacher should not allow other field experience students in the class.

How many conferences should there be between the Millersville University teacher candidate and me?

Communication lines must be kept open at all times. Teacher candidates need specific and immediate critiques of their activity with children. Please plan a definite time for conferences with teacher candidates, citing specific examples of items warranting praise or concern. The University supervisor may have specific requests for the number of conferences.

Is it necessary for teacher candidates to develop lesson plans?

The teacher candidate **must plan** his/her teaching activities. However, the extent of the planning and the development of formal lesson plans can be modified by such factors as teacher candidate readiness, knowledge of the subject to be taught, and prior level of experience (e.g., freshman, sophomore, or junior) in the field.

Who should decide what methods and materials the teacher candidate should use?

The cooperating teacher, in consultation with University supervisor, still has the responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning situation for the class. This should be a joint decision. The teacher candidate should be allowed some flexibility.

What about videotaping?

If equipment is available and student confidentiality is presumed, videotaping is an excellent learning tool.

What is my relationship with the University Supervisor?

Please communicate frequently with the University Supervisor. Report teacher candidate progress whenever possible and report concerns immediately.

How important is the Evaluation Form I am requested to complete?

The Evaluation Form is a valuable tool in looking at the teacher candidate's field experience. It is maintained in the individual's file. The feedback and discussion surrounding the evaluation is most helpful to the teacher candidate and university.

Appendix A

Disposition Category	PEU Dispositions Rubric Examples
COMMUNICATES PROFESSIONALLY	<p><u>Communicates clearly and appropriately with students, families, supervisor, cooperating teacher and other school personnel.*</u></p> <p>Follows appropriate channels of communication</p> <p>Abides by FERPA (Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act)</p> <p>Displays an appropriate sense of humor</p> <p>Writes and speaks clearly</p> <p>Is professional during educational interactions</p> <p>Is easily understood</p> <p>Conveys an appropriate tone</p> <p>Listens carefully and actively</p>
DEMONSTRATES PROFESSIONAL GROWTH	<p><u>Seeks out, reflects, and acts upon feedback from students, cooperating teacher, supervisor, and peers</u></p> <p><u>Demonstrates a commitment to ongoing professional development through use of literature and growth opportunities.</u></p> <p>Exhibits curiosity about the profession</p> <p>Seeks and accepts critical feedback from peers, supervisors, faculty, students and students' families</p> <p>Self-regulates and modifies professional behavior based upon feedback</p> <p>Is aware of and involved with professional organizations, publications and activities</p>
DEMONSTRATES PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS	<p><u>Demonstrates a belief that all students (including students with disabilities / linguistic / cultural diversity) can learn at high levels</u></p> <p><u>Collaborates with all appropriate individuals in planning for the success of students with exceptional needs</u></p> <p>Exhibits an understanding and acceptance of diversity</p> <p>Is respectful during interactions with school students, educational personnel and families</p> <p>Works collaboratively with others (colleagues, supervisors, cooperating teachers)</p> <p>Treats individuals equitably</p>
EXHIBITS ATTRIBUTES SUITABLE TO THE PROFESSION	<p><u>Meets professional expectations through appropriate dress, punctuality, language, and interpersonal skills.</u></p> <p><u>Demonstrates the value of preparation through the planning of meaningful lessons/units.</u></p> <p><u>Demonstrates a belief in classroom learning communities in which collaborative decision-making, inquiry, and individual responsibility to the group are valued.</u></p> <p>Presents information in a positive manner</p> <p>Demonstrates enjoyment in the content of the discipline</p> <p>Is flexible</p> <p>Demonstrates enjoyment of the profession of educator</p> <p>Is confident</p> <p>Displays positive relationships with children</p> <p>Cares for the profession</p> <p>Cares for the students' well being</p> <p>Is responsible</p> <p>Is energetic</p> <p>Demonstrates dedication</p> <p>Is personable</p> <p>Maintains professional appearance</p>
DISPLAYS RESPONSIBLE & ETHICAL BEHAVIOR	<p><u>Knows and adheres to Pennsylvania Professional Code of Ethics, copyright and privacy laws.</u></p> <p>Adheres to Professional Code of Ethics of Pennsylvania, MU, and specific Professional Organization(s) of the program</p> <p>Is honest</p> <p>Demonstrates ethical behaviors</p>

*Underlined items represent items used in the Millersville Student Teaching Evaluation Instrument

4=EXEMPLARY (Candidate consistently and effectively displays appropriate dispositions as defined by the program at a level expected of practicing professional educators)

3=PROFICIENT (Candidate consistently and effectively displays appropriate dispositions as defined by the program)

2=PARTIALLY PROFICIENT (Candidate displays acceptable dispositions as defined by the program in an inconsistent fashion OR is developing the dispositions in a positive fashion. More attention and focus is required of this Candidate)

1=DOES NOT MEET PROFICIENCY (Candidate has not displayed acceptable dispositions OR has not demonstrated an adequate level of professional behaviors as defined by the program OR has displayed behaviors counter to those accepted as professional dispositions)

Appendix B

PENNSYLVANIA'S CODE OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND CONDUCT FOR EDUCATORS

Section 1. Mission

The Professional Standards and Practices Commission is committed to providing leadership for improving the quality of education in this Commonwealth by establishing high standards for preparation, certification, practice and ethical conduct in the teaching profession

Section 2. Introduction

(a) Professional conduct defines interactions between the individual educator and students, the employing agencies and other professionals. Generally, the responsibility for professional conduct rests with the individual professional educator. However, in this Commonwealth, a Code of Professional Practice and Conduct (Code) for certificated educators is required by statute and violation of specified sections of the Code may constitute a basis for public or private reprimand. Violations of the Code may also be used as supporting evidence, though may not constitute an independent basis, for the suspension or revocation of a certificate. The Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC) was charged by the act of December 12, 1973 (P.L. 397, No. 141) (24P.S. §§ 12-1251 – 12-1268), known as the Teacher Certification Law, with adopting a Code by July 1, 1991. See 24 P.S. § 12-1255(a)(10).

(b) This chapter makes explicit the values of the education profession. When individuals become educators in this Commonwealth, they make a moral commitment to uphold these values.

Section 3. Purpose

(a) Professional educators in this Commonwealth believe that the quality of their services directly influences the Nation and its citizens. Professional educators recognize their obligation to provide services and to conduct themselves in a manner which places the highest esteem on human rights and dignity. Professional educators seek to ensure that every student receives the highest quality of service and that every professional maintains a high level of competence from entry through ongoing professional development. Professional educators are responsible for the development of sound educational policy and obligated to implement that policy and its programs to the public.

(b) Professional educators recognize their primary responsibility to the student and the development of the student's potential. Central to that development is the professional educator's valuing the worth and dignity of every person, student and colleague alike; the pursuit of truth; devotion to excellence; acquisition of knowledge; and democratic principles. To those ends, the educator engages in continuing professional development and keeps current with research and technology. Educators encourage and support the use of resources that best serve the interests and needs of students. Within the context of professional excellence, the educator and student together explore the challenge and the dignity of the human experience.

Section 4. Practices

(a) Professional practices are behaviors and attitudes that are based on a set of values that the professional education community believes and accepts. These values are evidenced by the professional educator's conduct toward students and colleagues, and the educator's employer and community. When teacher candidates become professional educators in this Commonwealth, they are expected to abide by this section

(b) Professional educators are expected to abide by the following:

(1) Professional educators shall abide by the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P.S. §§ 1-101 – 27-2702), other school laws of the Commonwealth, sections 1201(a)(1), (2) and (4) and (b)(1), (2) and (4) of the Public Employee Relations Act (43 P.S. §§ 1101.1201(a)(1), (2) and (4) and (b)(1), (2), and (4) and this chapter.

(2) Professional educators shall be prepared, and legally certified, in their areas of assignment. Educators may not be assigned or willingly accept assignments they are not certified to fulfill. Educators may be assigned to or accept assignments outside their certification area on a temporary, short-term, emergency basis. Examples: a teacher certified in English filling in a class period for a physical education teacher who has that day become ill; a substitute teacher certified in elementary education employed as a librarian for several days until the district can locate and employ a permanent substitute teacher certified in library science.

(3) Professional educators shall maintain high levels of competence throughout their careers.

(4) Professional educators shall exhibit consistent and equitable treatment of students, fellow educators and parents. They shall respect the civil rights of all and not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, culture, religion, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, disabling condition or vocational interest. This list of bases or discrimination is not all-inclusive.

(5) Professional educators shall accept the value of diversity in educational practice. Diversity requires educators to have a range of methodologies and to request the necessary tools for effective teaching and learning.

(6) Professional educators shall impart to their students principles of good citizenship and societal responsibility.

(7) Professional educators shall exhibit acceptable and professional language and communication skills. Their verbal and written communications with parents, students and staff shall reflect sensitivity to the fundamental human rights of dignity, privacy and respect.

(8) Professional educators shall be open-minded, knowledgeable and use appropriate judgment and communication skills when responding to an issue within the educational environment.

(9) Professional educators shall keep confidence information obtained in confidence in the course of professional service unless required to be disclosed by law or by clear and compelling professional necessity as determined by the professional educator.

(10) Professional educators shall exert reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions which interfere with learning or are harmful to the student's health and safety.

Section 5. Conduct

Individual professional conduct reflects upon the practices, values, integrity and reputation of the profession. Violation of §§ 235.6-235.11 may constitute an independent basis for private or public reprimand, and may be used as supporting evidence in cases of certification suspension and revocation.

Section 6: Legal obligations

(a) The professional educator may not engage in conduct prohibited by the act of December 12, 1973 (P.L. 397, No. 141) (24 P.S. §§12-1251-12-1268), known as the Teacher Certification Law.

(b) The professional educator may not engage in conduct prohibited by:

(1) The Public School code of 1949 (24 P.S. §§ 1-101-27-2702) and other laws relating to the schools or the education of children.

(2) The applicable laws of the Commonwealth establishing ethics of public officials and public employees, including the act of October 4, 1978 (P.L. 883, No. 170) (65 P.S. §§ 401-413), known as the Public Official and Employee Ethics Law.

(c) Violation of subsection (b) shall have been found to exist by an agency of proper jurisdiction to be considered an independent basis for discipline.

Section 7. Certification

The professional educator may not:

(1) Accept employment, when not properly certificated, in a position for which certification is required.

(2) Assist entry into or continuance in the education profession of an unqualified person.

(3) Employ, or recommend for employment, a person who is not certificated appropriately for the position.

Section 8. Civil Rights

The professional educator may not:

(1) Discriminate on the basis of race, National or ethnic origin, culture, religion, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, political beliefs, socioeconomic status; disabling condition or vocational interest against a student or fellow professional. This list of bases of discrimination is not all-inclusive. This discrimination shall be found to exist by an agency of proper jurisdiction to be considered an independent basis for discipline.

(2) Interfere with a student's or colleague's exercise of political and civil rights and responsibilities.

Section 9. Improper personal or financial gain

(1) Accept gratuities, gifts or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgment.

(2) Exploit a professional relationship for personal gain or advantage.

Section 10. Relationships with students

The professional educator may not:

(1) Knowingly and intentionally distort or misrepresent evaluations of students.

(2) Knowingly and intentionally misrepresent subject matter or curriculum.

(3) Sexually harass or engage in sexual relationships with students.

(4) Knowingly and intentionally withhold evidence from the proper authorities about violations of the legal obligations as defined within this section

Section 11. Professional relationships

The professional educator may not:

(1) Knowingly and intentionally deny or impede a colleague in the exercise or enjoyment of a professional right or privilege in being an educator.

(2) Knowingly and intentionally distort evaluations of colleagues.

(3) Sexually harass a fellow employee.

(4) Use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional decisions of colleagues.

(5) Threaten, coerce or discriminate against a colleague who in good faith reports or discloses to a governing agency actual or suspected violations of law, agency regulations or standards.