The Essential Student Teaching Handbook
# Texas State University Student Teaching Handbook - Table of Contents

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## Student Teacher Support

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Texas State University has developed professional educators for over 100 years. With more than 30 educator certification programs across the University--making up almost 14 percent of our student body--Texas State is one of the largest traditional educator preparation programs in the country. The program includes rigorous academic coursework and extensive field experience, supported by robust research in teaching and learning.

The conceptual framework that guides the Texas State Initial Teacher Preparation Program is based on three intersecting themes:

- the democratic purposes and outcomes of education,
- cultural competency in teaching and learning, and
- the development of the education professional.

Foremost is our belief that education is fundamental to a democratic society’s survival. Extending this belief are notions that all children can learn and that educators can and do make a difference in the lives of children, and by extension, for the communities in which they teach and for society in general. An additional foundational perspective is that the important aspects of a teacher’s development mentioned above optimally occur within the authentic setting of the classroom and are mediated by expert guidance, critical reflection, and assessment (Adler, 1982; Chung, 2008; Clemson, 1990; Coleman, 1988; Counts, 1932; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Dewey, 1916, 1923, 1938; Griffin, 1986; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Hammemess, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005; Holmes Group, 1990; InTASC, 2011; Valdés, 1996; Ribich, Agostino, Barone, & Birch, 1982; Werner, Avila, Resta, Venglar, & Curtin, 1995).

Every semester, hundreds of Texas State University students progress toward their goal of becoming certified teachers, and every year, thousands of K-12 students learn in classrooms guided by our Texas State graduates.

The Texas State University Instructional Model

All Texas State University teacher certification programs use The Danielson Framework for Teaching as the instructional model. In addition to providing a comprehensive picture of teaching, the Danielson Framework guides the growth of Texas State education students throughout their coursework and field experiences. The research-based Danielson Framework is similar to the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), the teacher evaluation tool currently endorsed by the Texas Education Agency. The Framework is aligned to the Texas State Teacher Standards as well. Experience with the Framework prepares Student Teachers for entrance into the public school system of Texas.

The Framework has a 4-point rubric that describes what effective teaching and learning looks like and sounds like in the classroom. Though the Framework was developed to describe the practice of a certified teacher in the classroom, Texas State values the use of the rubric with Student Teachers to reinforce growth towards highly effective instructional practices. Student Teaching Faculty use the Danielson Framework and rubric when conducting observations and evaluations of Student Teachers. Post observation conferences and instructional discussions during seminars are grounded in the Framework’s language and indicators of development.
Framework Ratings

Student Teaching Faculty receive extensive training in the Framework in order to conduct observations and score the Framework’s components. Student Teachers are required to complete the online Danielson Framework Study prior to the beginning of the semester in which they teach, regardless of prior experience with the Framework. Cooperating Teachers can access an overview training of the Framework and are provided additional support through interaction with Student Teaching Faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Indicates little to no evidence of effective component demonstration. Rubric adjectives include “lack of,” “unclear,” “unaware,” “poor,” and “unsuitable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Within this level, attempts are made, but results are inconsistent or minimal. Performance rubric descriptors include “partial,” “generally,” and “moderate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Describes the expected level of performance. Descriptors include “consistent,” “frequent,” “successful,” and “smooth.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Indicates a classroom where the level of effective learning and teaching is “solid,” “seamless,” “skillful,” and “preventative.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Related Resources

All resources are available through the Clinical Teaching Resource tab of the Office of Educator Preparation website.

- The Danielson Framework for Teaching *(Note: NOT available on the OEP website. This link takes you directly to the Danielson FFT website. You will have to share contact information in order to download this document.)*
- Instructional Model for Education Students: Danielson Framework for Teaching

The Student Teaching Assignment

The Student Teaching Practicum is the capstone field experience for our students working toward teacher certification. Student teaching is a six-semester-hour experience in a classroom of a public, and in some cases private or charter school. Student Teachers are required to complete a clinical teaching experience for a minimum of 14 weeks with a full day being 100% of the school day. Single-placement Student Teachers are placed with one Cooperating Teacher in one classroom for the entire 14 weeks. Split-Placement (usually All-Level) Student Teachers are placed with one Cooperating Teacher for the first half of the semester, and with another Cooperating Teacher for the last half of the semester. During this semester students are “students of teaching”. It is a time of much learning, improvement, and growth, supported by the Cooperating Teacher and University Student Teaching Faculty. All candidates for initial teacher certification student teach for one full semester. Approximately 150 schools in 55 school districts across Texas host our students for the student teaching experience. The Office of Educator Preparation is the entity responsible for facilitating and monitoring this experience. This handbook outlines the program guidelines, policies, standard experiences, and participant requirements, roles, and responsibilities.
This experience is of paramount importance to the future careers of Student Teachers, and, along with other criteria, must be completed successfully in order to receive recommendation to certify by the Office of Educator Preparation. Commitment to learning, growth, professionalism and open communication is critical. Questions and concerns should be addressed immediately by all parties, initially through Student Teaching Faculty and, as necessary, through the Director of the Office of Educator Preparation.

Assignments are made by our partner school districts in collaboration with the Office of Educator Preparation with care and attention to many factors. At no time should the Student Teacher contact a district directly as it violates our memorandum of understanding with our partners. Additionally, adjustments in assignments are not made after the Student Teacher begins except in unusual circumstances. No Student Teacher is to be reassigned without the prior approval of the Director of the Office of Educator Preparation.

Expectations of the Student Teacher

Student Teachers meet with Student Teaching Faculty prior to school placements to receive information about their role during the student teaching experience, as well as attend additional Texas State seminars during the semester. Texas State and Student Teaching Faculty expectations for Student Teachers are outlined below.

Student Teacher Standard Experiences

To maintain equity with assignments and workloads, Texas State University has established a set of common experiences for Student Teachers. Because of the context of the placements, the details of these requirements vary somewhat between elementary and secondary. Student Teachers will receive specific information about these standard experiences from the Student Teaching Faculty during the orientation meeting at the beginning of the semester. The major requirements are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Visit</th>
<th>Student Teachers are asked to visit their assigned classroom prior to the first day of student teaching if possible.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations of the Cooperating Teacher</td>
<td>Student Teachers are expected to observe the Cooperating Teacher teach and manage the classroom environment, especially during the early weeks of student teaching. These opportunities provide excellent examples of effective teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>Through regular reflections submitted to the Student Teaching Faculty, the Student Teacher will assess his/her growth as a teacher and learner and reflect upon how to refine and expand teaching skills, classroom management techniques, and professional growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Responsibility</td>
<td>Student Teachers and Cooperating Teachers will collaborate to develop a schedule for assuming instructional responsibility, using the appropriate Timeline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization System</td>
<td>Student Teachers will develop and maintain an organization system that should result in effective storage and retrieval of information and resources gathered throughout the semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plans</td>
<td>As Student Teachers assume instructional responsibilities, they will be responsible for developing lesson plans. Lesson plan expectations differ between elementary and secondary. Specific lesson plan requirements will be shared by Student Teaching Faculty with Student Teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Observation Conference</td>
<td>Prior to observations, Student Teachers and Student Teaching Faculty will review and reflect on the lesson plan, focusing on the interrelationships between planning, instruction, the learning environment, and student outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Observation Reflection</td>
<td>After each observation by faculty, Student Teachers participate in a post-observation conference during which the Student Teacher is guided through a reflection on their strengths and areas for improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midpoint Conference</td>
<td>After Student Teaching Faculty and Cooperating Teacher come to consensus about midpoint assessment of progress, the Student Teacher will participate in a midpoint conference with the Cooperating Teacher, discussing progress and setting goals for professional learning and growth in practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>In preparation for the mandatory Texas State Job Fair, Student Teachers are expected to develop a professional resume.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Responsibility Assignment</td>
<td>The Student Teacher will complete a “Statement of Professional Responsibility” that details their demonstration of professionalism. This assignment will assist the Cooperating Teacher and the Student Teaching Faculty in measuring the Student Teacher’s demonstration of professional responsibility for the final evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Evaluation</td>
<td>The Student Teacher will participate in a final evaluation conference with the Cooperating Teacher and Student Teaching Faculty, where summative ratings using the Texas State Student Teaching Rubric will be shared.</td>
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### Related Resources

All resources are available through the Clinical Teaching Resource tab of the [Office of Educator Preparation website](http://example.com).

- Total Teach Timeline (Elementary)
- Instructional Timeline (Secondary)
- All-level/Two Fields Instructional Timeline
- Lesson Plan Formats
- The Right Questions for Planning: Using the Danielson Framework (Pre-conference and lesson planning support document)
- Student Teacher Final Evaluation Form
- Texas State Final Evaluation Performance Level Descriptors

### Additional Expectations

- **Communication:** Communication throughout the student teaching experience is critical to successful completion of student teaching. All university communication takes place through Bobcat Mail. Students are responsible for checking their email daily and responding appropriately. Additionally, communication and documentation takes place in ePortfolio.
Students are responsible for completing the required actions (acknowledgements, uploads, etc.) in a timely manner. Your faculty and cooperating teacher may incorporate phone calls and text as a means of further communication. Be sure to respond to all communication in kind.

- **Classroom Authority**: Texas State expects the Student Teacher to work within the context of the Cooperating Teacher’s classroom and school and accept that the Cooperating Teacher has the ultimate responsibility for how the Student Teacher may operate in the classroom.

- **Campus Policies**: Student Teachers should know and follow the policies of the school on which they are assigned. Cooperating Teachers are encouraged to share school policy, as well as prompt and coach their Student Teacher when necessary.

- **Required TxState Meetings**: Student Teachers are required to attend all Texas State Student Teacher orientation and training sessions, meetings, as well as the Texas State Job Fair and all Student Teaching Faculty meetings and seminars.

- **Deadlines and Acknowledgement Requirements**: The OEP keeps Student Teachers informed of important submission dates and deadlines. It is the Student Teacher’s responsibility to meet deadlines when applying for graduation, exit exams and certification. In addition, Student Teachers must acknowledge their observations and final evaluation in the online ePortfolio system.

- **“Passing” Student Teaching**: To successfully complete Student Teaching and receive credit (CR), the Student Teacher must successfully complete their 14 week placement, including the 2 week Total Teach requirement. In addition, the Student Teacher must receive a rating of “2” or higher on each of the final evaluation components.

- **Growth Plan**: If a Student Teacher’s performance is in need of *significant intervention in order for the Student Teacher to complete student teaching*, the Growth Plan process will be initiated and the Texas State Office of Educator Preparation will be informed.
  - Ideally, the identification of areas needing significant improvement will occur early, leaving time for action steps to be implemented. Early and open communication between the Student Teacher, the Cooperating Teacher, and Student Teaching Faculty is critical.
  - Once it has been determined that a growth plan is necessary, a conference with the Student Teacher will be held. *The Student Teacher will be responsible for the creation and enactment of the growth plan* with guidance provided by the Cooperating Teacher and Student Teaching Faculty.

### Professionalism

The Student Teacher is expected to demonstrate professionalism throughout their program, maintaining cooperative and collaborative relationships, complying with University, school and school district policies, and conducting themselves ethically and with integrity.
• Texas Education Code of Ethics - In 2016 a new Code of Ethics was adopted by the State Board of Education. All preservice and in-service teachers are required to uphold all aspects of this code. To maintain accountability with the Texas Education Agency, Student Teachers must document that they have read and understood the Code of Ethics in their ePortfolio binders.

• Ethical or Professional Concerns - In the event that a Student Teacher witnesses or experiences unprofessional behavior in the host school, the Student Teacher should first contact Student Teaching Faculty for support and guidance. In no instance should action be taken to report unethical or unprofessional behavior without first consulting Student Teaching Faculty.

• Cooperative and Acceptable Work Ethic - As a guest at the host school and in the Cooperating Teacher’s classroom, the Student Teacher should work in a professional, cooperative manner with all who s/he encounters.

• Confidentiality - The Student Teacher is expected to know and adhere to the school policy on the use of confidential information that may be obtained through student records, conversations, or other sources. Confidentiality regarding students, information about parents of students, or information shared with you must be maintained.

• Dress Code - Student Teachers are expected to present a professional appearance that reflects the transition from college student to educator. The Student Teacher is expected to dress appropriately and professionally at all times, complying with the dress code policy of the host school and district.

### Related Resources

All resources are available through the Clinical Teaching Resource tab of the [Office of Educator Preparation website](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/)

- Texas Education Code of Ethics
- Texas State University Student Teacher Dress Code

### Student Teaching Policies

This handbook section provides an overview of basic policies regarding the student teaching experience. This, in conjunction with the current Student Teaching Syllabus, provides specific guidance regarding program policy.

| Criminal History and Background Check | For a new teacher, or one in a new district, a teaching background check is required. The Texas Education Code Section 22.083(b) authorizes the district to obtain criminal history record information on applicants being considered for employment with the district. The district requires everyone who is going to be in classrooms to be cleared through a criminal record check prior to being on campus. Based on information recorded in a student’s criminal history, students may be ineligible for issuance of a certification upon completion of the Educator Preparation Program. If concerned, students should request a Preliminary |

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Texas State University  
FALL2018
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<tr>
<th><strong>Criminal History Evaluation</strong> from the Texas Education Agency, schedule an appointment for free legal counseling services through <strong>Texas State University’s Attorney for Students</strong> and disclose this information to the Office of Educator Preparation.</th>
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<td><strong>Professional Liability</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Injuries at Student Teaching Site</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Substituting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Teacher Attendance</strong></td>
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</table>
| | • The Texas Education Agency requires a minimum number of days the
Student Teacher must be in the classroom. Therefore, days missed will be made up after the last official day of student teaching, regardless of the reason, unless the Cooperating Teacher and Student Teaching faculty approve another arrangement.

- The Student Teacher is to be present at the school for the entire day (Exceptions are made to attend required Texas State events, meetings, and seminars) and to follow the required start and end times for their school. Lateness is inexcusable.
- The Student Teacher must notify both the Cooperating Teacher and Student Teaching Faculty of absences as soon as possible. Failure to notify may result in the termination of the student teaching assignment.
- If absent, s/he must send plans/materials to the Cooperating Teacher if these were his/her responsibility for that day.
- An “Absentee Form for Student Teachers” must be submitted prior to an absence for personal reasons and the first day back from an emergency absence (available on TRACS).
- The state requires a minimum number of days for student teaching. If at any time the Student Teacher’s absences are excessive and prevent the student from reaching the minimum requirement, the placement will be terminated, and the student will have to reapply for the opportunity to student teach in a future semester. NOTE: There is no partial credit for student teaching.

Absences Due to Personal Business
- TExES Exams: Student Teachers are encouraged to take their TExES exams prior to assuming total instructional responsibility. They are expected to schedule their TExES exams after school hours or on Saturday, if possible. A Student Teacher that must miss student teaching for a TExES exam will be required to submit an absence form and make up the absence.
- Interviews: Absences for interviews should be limited, approved by Student Teaching Faculty, and must be made up.
- Other: Student Teachers who are absent due to any other personal business must receive prior approval and must make up the absence.

Absences Due to Weather or other Emergencies:
- In the case of a district or public emergency (for example, serious weather events, safety lockdowns, etc.), student teachers must contact both their ST Faculty and the Office of Educator Preparation within two hours of the event to ensure communication and safety.

Absences Due to Religious Holidays
- It is the responsibility of each Student Teacher to notify the Cooperating Teacher and Student Teaching Faculty in advance when they will be absent from school for a religious holiday. The Student Teacher should obtain approval for scheduling makeup time and work for this absence.
### Calendar

**Work Days/Hours:** Student Teachers are to follow the school staff calendar and work hours.

- Although arriving early and staying late for meetings, team planning, and preparation for class is expected, returning for night meetings or weekend events should not be required.
- Student Teachers will follow the calendar of the school district in which they are assigned. If the district has a holiday and the University is in session, the Student Teacher will have a holiday unless Student Teaching Faculty schedules a meeting or seminar. If the school has scheduled professional development days, the Student Teacher is required to participate unless specifically requested not to by the district or school.
- Cooperating Teachers and Student Teachers should familiarize themselves with the University Student Teaching calendar for mandatory meetings, due dates, and other information. A copy of the current semester’s calendar can be downloaded from the OEP website.

**Inclement Weather:** In case of inclement weather closures or late starts, Student Teachers follow the staff hours and calendar of the district in which they are assigned.

- If the district is closed or starts late due to inclement weather, the Student Teacher is expected to adhere to his/her assigned district’s expectations for staff, even if Texas State continues to hold classes.
- If Texas State implements a closure or late start, but the Student Teacher’s district does not, the Student Teacher will comply with the district’s expectations.
- Any days missed due to school being cancelled do not need to be made up if the district’s weather make-up day occurs after the last day of student teaching. If the district’s “weather day” falls within the Student Teacher’s official semester and the district is in session because of previous bad weather, the Student Teacher will attend that day.

### Outside Responsibilities

During the student teaching semester, the Student Teacher’s first responsibility is to the students he/she teaches. Other obligations should not interfere with student teaching responsibilities.

- Outside activities (e.g., employment, sports, sororities, fraternities) should be held to a minimum by Student Teachers during their student teaching experience.
- No Student Teacher will be excused to leave early for work or for class.

### Related Resources

All resources are available through the Clinical Teaching Resource tab of the Office of Educator Preparation website.

- Student Teacher Absence Form
### Student Teacher Support

Student Teachers are supported in the field during the student teaching practicum by the Office of Educator Preparation through assigned Student Teaching Faculty, and by the host school through the assigned Cooperating Teacher. The role of each support figure are outlined below.

### Hosting Student Teachers: Cooperating Teachers

The Cooperating Teacher is a critical figure within the student teaching experience, acting as a mentor and day-to-day guide during a Student Teacher’s placement. A brief summary of the roles and requirements of the Cooperating Teacher are outlined below. *Detailed guidance can be found in the Cooperating Teacher’s Resource Guide, available on the OEP website.*

| Training | • Complete the Cooperating Teacher online training modules (suggested).  
|          | • Review the Cooperating Teacher Handbook.  
|          | • Attend an orientation meeting with Texas State Student Teaching Faculty. |

| Mentoring | • Welcoming the Student Teacher (ST) to the classroom and building a trust relationship.  
|          | • Introducing the ST to the classroom, school, staff, and district.  
|          | • Encouraging and supporting the ST.  
|          | • Facilitating the professional learning and growth of the ST. This should include dialogue, co-planning, observation/feedback, and collaborative problem-solving.  
|          | • Planning for and facilitating the assumption of instructional responsibilities by the ST.  
|          | • Collaborating with ST to complete various Standard Experiences.  
|          | • Collaborating with ST Faculty to promote/monitor progress of the ST. |

| Standard Experiences | • Parent Letter - Review and approve the letter of introduction the ST will send home to the classroom parents.  
|                     | • Class Background Study - provide pertinent information regarding students, school, procedures, schedule, etc.  
|                     | • Total Teach Timeline - co-create a plan for gradual release of teaching responsibilities to the ST.  
|                     | • Student Work Reflection - provide input for ST submission of the student work reflection.  
|                     | • Midpoint Conference - share midpoint ratings with the ST and co-create goals and action steps.  
|                     | • Final Evaluation Conference - Participate in the summative conference with the ST and Student Teaching Faculty. |

| Evaluations | • Collaborate with ST Faculty to determine ST progress and further observation requirements during Midpoint Conference.  
|            | • Collaborate with ST Faculty to determine final evaluation ratings at end of placement. |
Guiding the Student Teacher: Student Teacher Faculty

Student Teaching Faculty are another critical figure within the student teaching experience, acting both as a mentor and a facilitator of professional learning and growth in practice. Student Teaching Faculty have extensive experience in observing, mentoring, and training, and are committed to partnering with the University, the school, the Cooperating Teacher, and the Student Teacher to create the best possible experience during the student teaching placement. Faculty duties encompass working with Student Teachers within the district/school environment, providing external support and training, and completing all required Texas State documentation. A brief summary of the roles and requirements of University Student Teaching Faculty are outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Standard Experiences</th>
<th>Evaluations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete all required training, including but not limited to the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FFT) online training (Teachscape), Danielson FfT calibration training, and TEA required trainings.</td>
<td>Facilitate the professional learning and growth of the ST. This should include dialogue, co-planning, observation/feedback, and collaborative problem-solving.</td>
<td>Conduct a Student Teacher Orientation meeting prior to the beginning of the placement window.</td>
<td>Collaborate with Cooperating Teacher to determine ST progress and additional observation requirements during Midpoint Conference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend all mandatory Office of Educator Preparation trainings and meetings.</td>
<td>Collaborate with ST to complete various Standard Experiences.</td>
<td>Conduct a series of seminars focused on Danielson Framework for Teaching, Domains 1, 2, and 3, as well as resume building.</td>
<td>Collaborate with Cooperating Teacher to determine final evaluation ratings at end of placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide orientation training for Cooperating Teachers and school administrators per guidelines.</td>
<td>Collaborate with Cooperating Teacher to promote/monitor progress of the ST.</td>
<td>Ensure completion of tasks and assignments outlined in the Student Teacher Standard Experiences.</td>
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<td>Conduct at least 3 formal observations, each of which must be 45 minutes or longer.</td>
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<td>Facilitate pre- and post-observation conferences for each formal observation.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Final Recommendations

Before Student Teachers can be certified in Texas, they must do the following:

- Take/pass all required TExES exams. Specific information is posted on the Office of Educator Preparation website.
- Apply for teacher certification online. Guidelines are provided on the Office of Educator Preparation website.