

Field Placements

How do I find a field placement?

Use the local school district websites for contact information and information on finding field placements. Some districts require formal applications for fieldwork. If the information is not on the website, then call a school and find out if fieldwork is possible and the procedures for requesting a placement. Two local websites of school districts are listed at the bottom of this page.

BE PREPARED. DO NOT CONTACT SCHOOLS UNTIL:

- You have worked out a schedule for observation/participation for the entire semester. Be prepared to specifically provide the days each week and the hours that you will be able to be at the school. Be prepared to be flexible to accommodate the school/mentor teacher schedule.
- You have organized all your courses requiring placements so that you have a complete list of assignments and know exactly what subject areas and what types of fieldwork you need.
- Have organized this information for a principal and hosting teacher along with the instructor letters outlining the fieldwork and a copy of the FEV (Field Evaluation & Verification form) that they will complete.

BE PATIENT BUT PROMPT

- Schools often take a week to 10 days (or longer) to return nonessential phone calls or confirm field placements.
- Do not send out e-mails for the initial requests. Take time to contact schools individually. If the school contact tells you to email or contact a specific person, then do so promptly. If you contact more than one school and both schools then say you may participate there, be prepared with a plan for how you will split your participation. Do not ask for the privilege and then turn it down with a "I already found something else."
- Be prompt in your replies to the school.

BE PROFESSIONAL

- DO NOT cancel field experiences or change schedules. In case of an emergency, contact the school immediately.
- Provide hours to assist the classroom and school beyond the hours you need for assignments.
- Dress and act professionally at all times (you are being "interviewed" informally).
- Ask questions to help you meet the needs of the students and learn as a novice teacher.
- DO NOT gossip or offer a "professional opinion," which you have not yet earned.

BE POLITE

- Personally thank (in person) anyone who helped you secure the placement when you visit (e.g., school secretary, principal, assistant principal, department chair).
- Formally thank in a handwritten note the people who helped make your field experience successful (e.g., mentor teacher, paraprofessional, school custodian).

What do I do if I do not have a car to get to my field experiences?

All teacher candidates must arrange for their own transportation to fieldwork. Possible solutions include:

- Coordinating with a peer colleague to travel to the same school;
- Planning a full day of fieldwork at a school and using public transportation or taxi services;
- Meeting with Ms. Judith Kaminski, Director of the Satellite Network Program & Student Teaching, to learn about local public transportation routes near local schools.

What do I do if I cannot find a field placement and a course assignment is due soon?

- First, you should have your field placement scheduled to complete your course assignments and should be asking for suggestions prior to a week before the assignment is due. Hundreds of candidates find field placements every semester, so your ability to professionally arrange for field placement is an indicator of your readiness to advance in your teacher education program. Learning how to contact schools and network with educators is an essential skill in becoming a teacher.
- Second, you should use your past or current field assignments to help you network to new assignments (e.g., ask your current or past mentors if they can help you connect with teachers at different levels or in different content areas; ask administrators who have helped you in the past if they can help you locate a new field placement).
- Third, ask your course instructors if they can help you locate an alum or teacher contact who might be able to help you with your fieldwork.
- Finally, meet with Ms. Judith Kaminski, Director of the Satellite Network Program & Student Teaching, to see if she can help you secure a contact with one of our local school partners.

Can I complete field experiences in a school I attended where I know the teachers, or with family members or friends who are teachers?

Yes. But these hours may **not** be used on the field experience spreadsheet, which records the hours being counted toward student teaching. Completing fieldwork in familiar settings, which represent professional conflicts of interest, delays finding field placements that may serve as potential student teaching sites.

Can I complete field experiences in private schools?

Yes. But only 10 hours may be counted on the field experience spreadsheet, as long as the field experience was not a professional conflict of interest and was completed with a licensed educator.

Reminders:

- Student Teaching Placements must be in public schools within a 25-mile radius of campus.
- Student teaching must be completed under the active supervision of a cooperating teacher who is licensed and qualified to teach in the area, has a minimum of three years of teaching experience, has received a proficient or above performance rating in the most recent evaluation, and who is directly engaged in teaching subject matter or learning activities in the area of student teaching.
- School districts may set additional requirements for cooperating teachers.

Useful School Information Links:

DuPage Regional Office of Education: See the “School Info” link <http://www.dupage.k12.il.us/>

Chicago Public Schools: See “Schools” on homepage <http://www.cps.edu>

See also CPS Student Teaching Program in the link to Chicago Public Schools Talent Website (accessed through the link on Career Opportunities).