**Roles and Responsibilities Fall of Your Professional Year**

The first semester of the Professional Year (the semester preceding student teaching) provides an opportunity for pre-service teachers to become familiar with their upcoming student teaching responsibilities. During this semester, students take a full load of courses on campus, including. *EDUC 481 – Instructional Theory and Practice in Inclusive Classrooms (3credits) and the lab component of the course, EDUC 482(1 credit). EDUC 481 and EDUC 482 combined is also know as the “methods course.”* As part of this methods course, candidates are assigned to two 20-hour field experiences with their middle school and high school cooperating teachers. Business education candidates, who have a single student teaching placement, are assigned to one 40-hour field experience with the high school cooperating teacher. This arrangement allows candidates to become acquainted with their cooperating teachers, as well as the students, expectations, policies, and procedures at the schools before actually entering student teaching.

*Role of the Student Teacher*

As suggested above, the purpose of the field experience during the methods course is to provide an opportunity for candidates to orient themselves to their upcoming student teaching experience. To this end, they are expected to contact each of their cooperating teachers early in the semester and arrange a schedule for field experiences. It is expected that students will get acquainted with their cooperating teacher and his/her students, materials, routines, and procedures. It is also expected that students will become acquainted with the school beyond the classroom, including its history, philosophy, policies, and personnel. Finally, it is expected that student teachers will “get their feet wet” by developing a sampling of lesson plans and student assessments, teaching a couple of lessons, and engaging in a variety of teaching activities, as time permits. These expectations are specified in *Forms A* and *A-1*, samples of which are included in Appendix I.

*Role of the Cooperating Teacher as Field Supervisor*

The cooperating teacher plays a key role in the development of the student teacher by modeling, offering suggestions, guiding, demonstrating, conferring, counseling, and evaluating. Called upon for advice on everything from classroom management to selection of instructional media, the cooperating teacher is a major influence on the future teacher. Since the candidate will most likely be apprehensive about his/her abilities to succeed in the classroom, the cooperating teacher’s guidance during the pre-student teaching field experience is very important. The field experience provides an excellent opportunity to address some of the candidate’s initial anxieties. Experience has shown that preliminary concerns of candidates often include:

What will the cooperating teacher expect of me?

What standards does the cooperating teacher maintain?

When is the best time to approach my cooperating teacher—before school, after school, during planning periods?

Can I contact my cooperating teacher at home if I have a question or would he/she prefer messages at school?

How much of my own initiative will my cooperating teacher expect? Allow?

What should I do if I make a mistake?

How should I dress?

How/when will my cooperating teacher provide me with feedback?

The above questions form a good foundation for early discussions between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. In time, additional items relative to a particular school, subject area, and students will certainly be raised by both the candidate and cooperating teachers as the initial relationship develops into a cooperative effort.

Cooperating teachers are asked to complete two forms for the field experience, *Form A* and *Form A-1* (see Appendix I). *Form A* records the activities completed as part of the field experience; *Form A-1* is the cooperating teacher’s evaluation of the candidate’s performance. Both forms must be completed by the cooperating teacher and submitted before a course grade for *EDUC 482* can be assigned. Concerns regarding the pre-service candidate’s readiness to begin student teaching should be addressed to either the *EDUC 481* professor or the Director of Field Experiences, who is also the instructor for EDUC 482.