

Memoranda of Understanding
Elida Local Schools
and
Bluffton University Education Department
Educator Preparation Program
2025 - 2030

This agreement shall exist between the Elida Local Schools, hereafter referred to as the “District” and the Education Department of Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio, hereafter referred to as the “Education Department.” The terms of this agreement will become effective on January 1, 2025, and will end on January 1, 2030.

The Education Department desires to place educator preparation candidates in the classrooms of said District for the purpose of their participation in clinical experiences (including student teaching) and other field-based educator preparation experiences.

The District desires to cooperate with the Education Department in facilitating clinical experiences and other field-based experiences for educator preparation candidates and approves the utilization of its schools for such purposes by the Education Department. The placement of such educator preparation candidates in the classroom of said District shall be under the direction and control of the Superintendent.

This agreement is contingent upon authorized signatures on behalf of the Board of Education and the Director of Educator Preparation Programs of Bluffton University.

Definition of Terms

Educator Preparation Candidate – A student enrolled in an educator preparation preparatory course who is to complete identified tasks in the District’s classroom(s) in order to meet requirements of field-based experiences.

Student Teacher -- A candidate acquiring practical student teaching experience for twelve weeks under the guidance of a cooperating teacher. The student is eligible for this experience after having completed specified educator preparation courses including methods courses, prerequisites and pre-student teaching field experiences and having earned at least the required 2.7 accumulative grade point average.

Field-Based Experiences – Planned in-school experiences for educator preparation candidates or student teachers which have specific learning objectives and are evaluated and supervised

- Exploratory Field Experiences – opportunities to gain an awareness of educational attitudes and ideas by observing and/or helping a teacher within a classroom setting.
- Focused Field Experiences/Clinical Experiences -- opportunities to use the skills being developed in coursework on campus. Educator preparation candidates observe instruction and being to teach short lessons to individual students or in small and large group settings as well as take on more classroom duties.

- **Intensive** – candidates are provided opportunities to recognize and apply cause and effect relationships in the classroom. With the help of the classroom teacher, the student works gradually toward teaching independently in the classroom, handling all duties and responsibilities of the classroom teacher.

Participating/Mentor Teacher – A practicing teacher in the District who is assigned an educator preparation candidate other than a student teacher and who supervises exploratory and focused field experiences.

Cooperating Teacher – A practicing teacher in the District who is assigned a student teacher for a focused experience (student teaching) of twelve weeks. A cooperating teacher must have the appropriate standard certification/licensure and a minimum of three years of classroom teaching experience, including one year in the field for which service is being provided. The District has the final approval of cooperating teacher status based upon these mutually acceptable criteria.

Field Experience/Student Teaching Supervisor – A member of the Bluffton University Education Department assigned to observe and evaluate the performance of the educator preparation candidate in the field experience, clinical experience or student teaching.

Coordinator of Field Experiences – A member of the Bluffton University Education Department in charge of the placement and coordination of student field experiences with area schools.

Building Principal or designee – The school administrator or designee who has the responsibility for confirming all placements and overseeing the implementation of field experiences with Bluffton University for the school.

Responsibilities

This agreement will be cooperatively administered through the office of the Director of the Educator Preparation Program at Bluffton University and the office of the Superintendent of the District. Policy matters may be directed to the Coordinator of Field Experiences at Bluffton University who will be the liaison person for the university. This is not to preclude open and direct communication between the administrative offices of the Education Department and the Superintendent. It is hoped that the benefits of the written agreement will include the improvement and maintenance of good communications between the respective educational institutions.

Roles and Responsibilities

A. The Educator Preparation Program will:

1. Provide educator preparation candidates who are qualified for the prescribed field experience or clinical experience.
2. Define the objectives of the field-based experience(s) and the expected level of performance for the educator preparation candidates and/or student teachers.
3. Provide for coordination of field activities through the Coordinator of Field Experiences at Bluffton University.
4. Provide orientation for participating school personnel, including an explanation of the objectives of each field experience and the responsibilities of university personnel, educator preparation candidates, student teachers, and participating supervisor personnel as requested by the District.
5. Remunerate each District/school of a student teacher for rendering service including facilitating and supervising the experience and evaluating the practitioner. An amount of \$100.00 will be paid to the district for supervising the equivalent of one full-time student teacher.

6. All Bluffton University students who are placed in a classroom in the District's schools will undergo fingerprinting, enroll in the RAPBACK program, and hold a Pre-service teacher permit or a current substitute teaching license.

According to ORC section 3310.0812 (B) a school district or school may employ an individual with the Pre-service teaching permit as a substitute teacher **with compensation**. Bluffton University will provide rules and guidelines for college students hired as substitute teachers based on the field/clinical placement.

B. The Superintendent of the District will:

1. Provide the school setting commensurate with agreed upon objectives for the specific field-based experience or student teacher assignment.
2. Provide qualified participating and cooperating teachers.
3. Be responsible for dissemination of the conditions of the agreement as they pertain to teachers and other educational personnel or interested parties.
4. Provide a substitute during the absence of the regular cooperating teacher.

C. The Building Principal or designee will:

1. Advise the Superintendent and the university liaison on the selection of participating and cooperating teachers and in the assignment of educator preparation candidates and student teachers.
2. Orient educator preparation candidates and student teachers to the school, its facilities, personnel and policies, as well as the school community.
3. Safeguard educator preparation candidates and student teachers from accepting the role of substitute teacher. Student teachers may not be used as substitutes except in cases of extreme emergency while under the supervision of the building principal and with prior approval from the Coordinator of Field Experiences.

D. The Participating Teacher and the Cooperating Teacher will:

1. Attend any orientation session provided by Bluffton University for the identified on-site experience.
2. Facilitate the identified experience as defined by the specific objectives and activities for that experience.
3. Provide appropriate professional direction and supervision of educator preparation candidates and student teachers as they assume the roles and responsibilities associated with the specified field experience.
4. Confer regularly with the Bluffton University Field Experience Supervisor.
5. Confer regularly with the educator preparation candidate and student teacher to discuss responsibilities, performance and evaluation, and to plan appropriate activities.
6. Participate in assessment of the activities and services and the candidate's performance as specified for the particular field experience.
7. Be trained in the science of reading according to the requirements established by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

E. The Field Experience Supervisor and the Clinical Experience Supervisor will:

1. Ensure that the participating teacher and cooperating teacher are informed regarding the objectives and activities for the specified field experience.
2. Confer regularly with the participating teacher and the cooperating teacher to assess and facilitate the progress of the educator preparation candidate and student teacher.
3. Provide regular feedback to the educator preparation candidate and the student teacher regarding performance and progress in the specified field experience.

4. Evaluate the overall performance of the educator preparation candidate and student teacher using criteria developed for the specific field experience and meet with the cooperating teacher prior to submitting a grade for the student.

F. The Student Teacher and Educator Preparation Candidate will:

1. Meet the specific goals, objectives, and complete the required activities of the field or clinical practice.
2. Abide by the rules and regulations governing the professional conduct of teachers in the District.
3. Be available to confer regularly with the participating or cooperating teacher and/or the field experience supervisor concerning progress in the experience.
4. Be in attendance in the assigned school at the designated time period unless ill or otherwise excused. In the event of a work stoppage or strike within the District, student attendance is required on campus or at an alternative site as designated by the university. Services to the District are not to be provided by student teachers or educator preparation candidates during any work stoppage or strike.
5. Attend all student teacher seminars provided by the university (student teachers only).

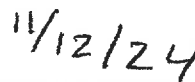
Detailed guidelines and suggestions concerning specific roles, responsibilities, activities and evaluation are described in the Bluffton University Field Experience and Student Teaching Handbook that are distributed to educator preparation candidates, student teachers, and cooperating teachers.

Information about specific experiences and all required paperwork will be emailed to the cooperating teacher.

The agreement is meant to reflect an evolving professional relationship between Bluffton University and the Elida Local Schools. Therefore, it is assumed there will be continuous assessment of the activities and services described herein with the responsibility of articulation residing with the respective liaison persons. Review of the terms of the agreement will be completed every five years or sooner upon request by either party to determine needed revisions.



Signature of Director of Educator Preparation Programs
Bluffton University



Date

Signature of Superintendent or designee
Elida Local Schools

Date