



The Teaching Excellence Teacher Candidate Handbook

YES Prep Public Schools



Table of Contents

Welcome!.....	4
Contacts.....	5
Teaching Excellence Philosophy	6
Our Vision.....	6
Our Mission	6
Our Purpose	6
Program Overview	7
Core Development Experiences.....	7
Induction.....	7
Teacher Development Saturdays.....	7
Professional Learning Modules	8
Instructional Coaching	8
Certification	8
Admission Requirements	10
The Steps to Certification.....	13
Application.....	13
Evaluation.....	13
Program Acceptance	13
Instructional Courses.....	13
Certification Test(s).....	13
Field-Based Experience.....	14
Your Intern (Teaching!) Year.....	14
Recommended for Certification.....	14
Teacher Development.....	17
Classroom Culture	17
Instructional Planning & Delivery	17
Data Driven Instruction.....	17
Teacher Leadership	17
Syllabus	17
Course Description Overview.....	17
Requirements.....	18
Courses.....	18
Instructional Courses.....	18
Observational Videos and Field-Based Experience	18

Objectives	18
Assignments	19
Instructional Coaching	19
Mentor Teachers	19
Certification Areas	21
Program Costs	23
Our Program Fees	23
How our Payment Plan works	23
Other Program Fees	23
Certification Fees	23
Certification Fees – payable to SBEC (State Board of Education Certification) ..	23
Renewal Fees	23

Welcome!

Welcome to Teaching Excellence! Our goal is to make teacher certification as clear as possible for you. Because the path to certification can seem intimidating, our hope is that this guide breaks down for you the milestones you will accomplish and the steps you will need to take on your journey to becoming a Certified Teacher.

As you are making the decision to enroll in Teaching Excellence and as you navigate through our program, please use this guide—along with information from your Instructional Coach, the Teaching Excellence Certification Team, and your trainings—to help you gather the things you need to:

1. Enroll as quickly as possible
and
2. Attain your Standard Certificate as quickly as possible

Once you have completed all admission requirements, you may be accepted into Teaching Excellence to begin programming. Once you have been accepted, it will be important for you to keep track of your progress through the program and have in mind the timeline for all state-required deliverables so that you may be certified in time.

We are excited to have you and welcome you into the Teaching Excellence family!

WELCOME, TEACHERS!



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Teaching Excellence Philosophy

For over a decade Teaching Excellence (TE) has existed to transform talent by providing exceptional coaching and professional development in order to accelerate teacher effectiveness. TE offers rigorous and relevant training, along with individualized coaching support, in order to increase teacher effectiveness and propel teachers' classrooms to new levels.

Proven and adopted by schools aiming for higher standards, Teaching Excellence has been responsible for the development and certification of thousands of teachers across both Houston and Dallas/Ft. Worth.

Our Vision

Teaching Excellence will be the Educator Certification and Preparation Program of choice for teachers striving to achieve certification and professional excellence through exemplary coaching and development.

Our Mission

Teaching Excellence (TE) transforms teacher effectiveness in year 1 by providing exceptional coaching, professional development, and a certification pathway in order to accelerate teacher effectiveness.

Our Purpose

Our core purpose is to accelerate teacher effectiveness. We believe exceptional coaching and professional development—culminating in certification—are the catalysts for this accelerated growth. Teaching Excellence programming aligns with district and campus priorities, ensuring that teacher effectiveness impacts achievement of our most important stakeholders—our student

Program Overview

The Teaching Excellence program is comprised of three main components: Instructional Coaching, Learning and Development, and Certification and Compliance.



Core Development Experiences

Teaching Excellence organizes its program around five core development experiences. These experiences serve as the vehicle for learning the foundational elements of effective teaching:

Induction

Induction is the foundation of teacher learning and development. This experience takes place in the summer and lasts two and a half weeks. The goal of Induction is for teachers to be prepared to set up a strong classroom culture, establish routines and procedures, and begin the work of planning and internalizing aligned lessons.

Teacher Development Saturdays

An immense amount of learning must take place to become an effective teacher. While Induction lays the foundation, this learning must continue over the course of the year. Teachers participate in Teacher Development Saturdays (TDS) once a month, to continue developing their knowledge and skills around instructional best practices. These experiences provide opportunities not only for teachers to

become aware of best practices but actually implement these practices in their work.

Professional Learning Modules

Online Professional Learning Modules (PLMs) provide teachers with exposure to a wide range of topics. These experiences are self-guided and may include reading and reflecting on an article, implementing high impact strategies into an upcoming lesson, or doing a case study on a student or group of students. PLMs do not follow a particular sequence, so teachers are able to choose experiences that match their current stage of development in the classroom.

Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is the cornerstone of the Teaching Excellence Program. Each Teaching Excellence Instructional Coach works with a cohort of about 17 teachers. The relatively small size of cohorts allows for frequent and regular touch points throughout the year. Through observations and debriefs and a variety of other methods, Instructional Coaches provide individualized support that is tailored to the specific needs of their teachers.

Certification

The core development experiences listed above serve two purposes: First, they provide multiple avenues for novice teachers to master the foundational elements of teaching. Second, with formal admission, each contributes to the requirements necessary to obtain a standard teaching certificate in the State of Texas. The certification team of the Teaching Excellence Program provides certification candidates with guidance around timelines, test preparation, and costs associated with certification. Additionally, individualized updates are provided throughout the year to inform candidates of their progress towards obtaining a Texas Standard Certificate.

COMPLETION OF TEACHING EXCELLENCE INCLUDES

Gotham

1

SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE AND FULFILL
ALL REQUIREMENTS OF TEACHING
EXCELLENCE COURSEWORK AND...

2

TEST IN THREE CATEGORIES

1. **Content:** This is your primary teaching field. This is chosen by Teaching Excellence based on your transcript and college coursework.
2. **Supplemental:** Tests such as the ESL, Bilingual, and Science of Teaching Reading (STR) are required for certain content areas. **Content** and **Supplemental Exams** are required for your Internship.
3. **Pedagogy:** All candidates are required to take the PPR exam prior to being issued their Standard Teaching Certificate.

3

INTERNSHIP

Obtain a teaching placement for one year and engage in Instructional Coaching and Observations as well as Teacher Development days.

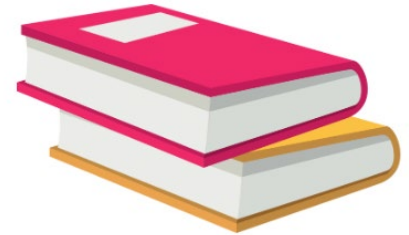
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GET YOUR CERTIFICATION!

Once you have started your internship year, you must complete all internship program requirements and state requirements before you earn your certification. This includes all instructional coursework, certification tests, successful field experience and balance paid in full.

Admission Requirements

- You must meet requirements for a certification area in addition to meeting basic admission requirements.^[1]^[SEP]
- You must have an email account and access to a computer.^[1]^[SEP]
- You must complete your [Candidate Profile](#).



Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education as required by Texas Education Agency and the Texas Administration Code

- You can view all regionally accredited institutions in the United States on the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) [website](#).

Official transcript and a conferred degree

- Your graduating GPA must be calculated and posted by the university on your official transcripts. If your transcript does not reflect a graduation GPA, you will need to contact your college's Registrar office to have a letter typed on university letterhead that includes your GPA sent in with your official transcripts

Minimum 2.50 grade point average, which will be determined in one of the following ways:

- Minimum 2.50 GPA (your undergraduate GPA as posted on conferred degree transcript) or
- Minimum 2.50 GPA in last 60 hours

In addition to meeting the basic admissions requirements, you must also meet requirements to be certified in a content area.

Teaching Excellence will determine in which content area you are eligible for certification during your application and transcript review. Only one content area may be identified for admissions. If you hold a degree in a specific content area, Teaching Excellence will identify this before any other content areas based on state requirements:

- TExES Content Test passed
- Conferred degree in a specific content area based on an academic major.
- 15 hours in identified content areas of English, math, science, and social studies for Core Subjects,
4-8 Subject Test and/or EC-12 Special Education; or
- TXPACT Test is not an instrument for content identification. However, TXPACT test may be required if transcript credits are inconclusive.

If you take and pass the appropriate PACT exam, Teaching Excellence is not guaranteeing you a job offer. Since these admission requirements are mandated by the state and affect all Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), passing the PACT exam in the subject area that you are interested in teaching will make you a more viable applicant for these types of positions and ensure that you are able to pursue alternative certification.

Formal Admission is only final when communicated to you directly by your Certification Program, which has the ultimate discretion on which exams and credit hours will be accepted towards the Formal Admission requirements.

Option 1

Have a minimum GPA of 2.5 on a conferred degree (or last 60 hours of a conferred degree)

A minimum of 12 semester credit hours in the subject-specific content area for certification sought (unless math or science, which need 15 credit hours)

Option 2

Take and pass the PACT content exam assigned to you by Teaching Excellence in your initial email



"I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn."

- Albert Einstein

The Steps to Certification

Application

You don't need to pay anything to Teaching Excellence to start your application process. Follow the steps below to get going!

1. [Complete your Candidate Profile](#) - The Candidate Profile Form will be used to collect demographic and applicant information as part of the enrollment process and will be submitted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The TEA collects this information from every certification program as part of their mandated state reporting.

2. Submit an Official Electronic Transcript - In accordance with the TEA Code, a transcript is only considered official if it has a degree conferred/awarded date* and is issued out and sent directly to Teaching Excellence. Submit your official electronic transcripts to teaching.excellence@yesprep.org.

**If you are currently finishing your Bachelor's degree, you do not have to submit a transcript with a degree conferred/awarded date, BUT you are still required to request an official electronic transcript from your university issued out and sent directly to Teaching Excellence.*

Evaluation

After your application and transcript are received, you will receive notification of your program status by a Teaching Excellence TEam member. Upon acceptance into the program, you will receive a Formal Admission Packet.

Program Acceptance

In order to be officially enrolled and admitted into Teaching Excellence, you will need to complete and sign the Formal Admission packet. Once accepted into the program, you will have immediate access to test certification prep materials, as well as online learning modules that will count towards your 150 hours of pre-service requirements.

Instructional Courses

You will attend Induction in the summer of your first year in Teaching Excellence. Depending on when you are admitted, Induction may fall at the beginning or end of your first year.

Before induction, you have a series of TalentLMS courses you will be required to complete. You can get started on these as soon as you are Formally Admitted!

Certification Test(s)

A content area will be identified for you upon acceptance into the Teaching Excellence program. You are not required to seek certification in the identified content area. You may request to test (PACT) in any content area before hiring. Regardless of the content area for enrollment, all candidates must pass a content test that matches their desired teaching assignment to be hired.

- If you are seeking special education certification, you may need to pass a specific content area test, i.e., EC-6 Core Subject or 4-8 Core Subject to indicate content mastery of a core content area.
- If teaching EC-6 Core, 4-8 Core, 4-8 English, Language Arts, and Reading and/or 4-8 English, Language Arts and Reading, and Social Studies, the Science of Teaching Reading test must be passed to be eligible for certification. If your primary area of certification is one of the aforementioned, please be aware that you must pass the STR exam in addition to content test.
- You take the TExES Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities test (PPR) only after you:
 - Pass the appropriate content test (any Supplement Test, if applicable)
 - Complete all pre-service hours and courses *and* take the PPR preparation TalentLMS course.

Field-Based Experience

In order to begin your internship, you must complete 30 total hours of classroom observations and reflections. 15 of those hours may be completed via online observations. The other 15 must be completed via observing in-person teaching or 1:1 instruction.

If you have been placed in a teaching assignment for 30 consecutive days after your Formal Admission, or if you were placed in a teaching assignment for 30 consecutive days up to two years before your Formal Admission, this time can satisfy your Field-Based Experience requirement. Your Principal or school administrator will need to fill out paperwork confirming your eligibility!



Your Intern (Teaching!) Year

You must teach for one full year in a teaching assignment aligned with your certification area before you can become certified. During this time, you will fulfill many requirements including:

- 150 hours of learning and coaching
- 5 formal observations completed by your Instructional Coach
- Completion of a Teacher Mentor and Mentee program (you're the Mentee!)
- Completion of payment for Teaching Excellence

Recommended for Certification

You are recommended for a Standard Certificate after successfully fulfilling the following program requirements:

Completing the instructional courses

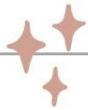
- Passing the required certification tests: a content test or tests (and Bilingual

Target Language Proficiency ESL Test [BTLPT] and Bilingual Supplement Test if applicable), and the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities test (PPR)

- Completing the field experience with recommendation from your Instructional Coach and campus administrator
- Completing all programming hours (that's 300 hours!)
- Paying all program fees
- Submitting the evaluation exit survey



REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST



*On the path to
certification*

☐

Apply for Teaching Excellence

☐

Submit Official Transcripts
teaching.Excellence@yesprep.org

☐

Complete Formal Admission
Packet

☐

Complete pre-service requirements

☐

Take and pass Content Exam(s)

☐

Internship year! And complete
all intern coursework

☐

Take and pass PPR

yes!



Teacher Development

Our core purpose is to accelerate teacher effectiveness. We believe exceptional coaching and professional development are the catalysts for this accelerated growth. Teaching Excellence's Instructional Coaches partner with system-wide staff and campus Instructional Leaders to align feedback and support. It is this aligned feedback that drives teachers to implement best practices, which results in student achievement. We focus on the Four Core Areas of Development:

Classroom Culture

We believe that a strong classroom culture is dependent on a strong behavior management system, consistent routines and procedures, and building transformative relationships with students and families.

Instructional Planning & Delivery

We develop teachers to utilize research-based planning and instructional methods, ensuring students are being exposed to and mastering content in the most effective way possible.

Data Driven Instruction

Instructional Coaches partner with teachers to assess their effectiveness based on how students are performing in their classrooms. By taking a data-driven approach, we ensure that teachers are aware of students' needs and adjusting their instruction accordingly.

Teacher Leadership

Instructional Coaches assist teachers in building the skills needed to be a leader both inside and outside the classroom. We encourage teachers to advocate for themselves and their students. Over the course of the year, Instructional Coaches aid teachers in becoming reflective practitioners who propel their own growth in the classroom.

Syllabus

Course Description Overview

Teaching Excellence coursework is designed to first and foremost empower novice teachers. Candidates can expect to develop both personally and in their educational craft through the Teaching Excellence coursework with a focus on three domains: Instructional Planning and Delivery, Culture of Learning, and Teacher Leadership and Development. Within these three domains candidates will develop in areas such as Identity & Self-awareness, Pedagogy & Child Development, Classroom Culture of Learning, Effective Lesson Planning & Facilitation, Equity-Driven Classrooms, and Supporting Diverse Learners. What sets Teaching Excellence coursework apart is the strong emphasis on practice, feedback, reflection, and collaboration in order to

develop each candidate with excellence. Through your studies in the Teaching Excellence Coursework, you will develop the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary for developing engaging & rigorous instruction, creating an inclusive learning environment, and becoming a confident and student-centered teacher leader.

Requirements

Teaching Excellence coursework occurs both in-person and online. Candidates are required to attend all in-person learning, including Induction and Teacher Development Days. Any absences, late arrival to, or early departure from in-person learning will be documented and may impact a teacher's path to certification. For online learning, candidates must have a work or personal computer that has access to Teaching Excellence's TalentLMS program, where all asynchronous online learning modules are found. Candidates are required to complete all assigned asynchronous learning modules in addition to self-selected learnings.



Courses

Instructional Courses

Observational Videos and Field-Based Experience

A library of observational videos is available to our candidates throughout enrollment in the Teaching Excellence program. These videos represent a variety of grade levels, content areas, and programs teachers may be certifying in. The purpose of these videos is to lift up best teaching practices and allow teachers to see what is true of effective classroom practice.

Objectives

The objectives of Teaching Excellence course are to Accelerate Teacher Effectiveness. Courses fall into three domains: Instructional Planning and Delivery, Culture of Learning, and Teacher Leadership and Development. Instructional Planning and Delivery course work is designed for teachers to develop the skills they need to plan and deliver the academic content they are teaching. In Culture of Learning courses teachers develop and practice the skills and mindsets that allow them to lead their classrooms and foster a positive culture where students can invest fully in learning. Teacher Leadership and Development domain is where teachers enhance skills and mindsets necessary to have positive impact as a leader in and outside their classroom.

Assignments

Assignments from Teaching Excellence may be assigned via TalentLMS or from Instructional Coaches to teachers; assignments may also be given during Teacher Development Days. All assignments are aligned to state readiness standards for teaching and serve the purpose of deepening the candidate's understanding of the art and craft of teaching.

At Teaching Excellence, we value quality work; it is critical to the successful completion of Teaching Excellence programming that any and all work be of the caliber required for graduate level coursework. Imagine you're back in college or grad school—we expect your best work, here!

Any assignment not meeting the program's high standards will be returned. Assignments will be graded within three to four business days. Once the requirements for a specific course are complete, you will be advanced to the next course at the appropriate time. While you wait to be advanced, please spend some time reflecting and conducting individual research on each course.



Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is the cornerstone of the Teaching Excellence Program. Each Teaching Excellence Instructional Coach works with a cohort of about 17 teachers. The relatively small size of cohorts allows for frequent and regular touch points throughout the year. Through observations and debriefs and a variety of other methods, Instructional Coaches provide individualized support that is tailored to the specific needs of their teachers.

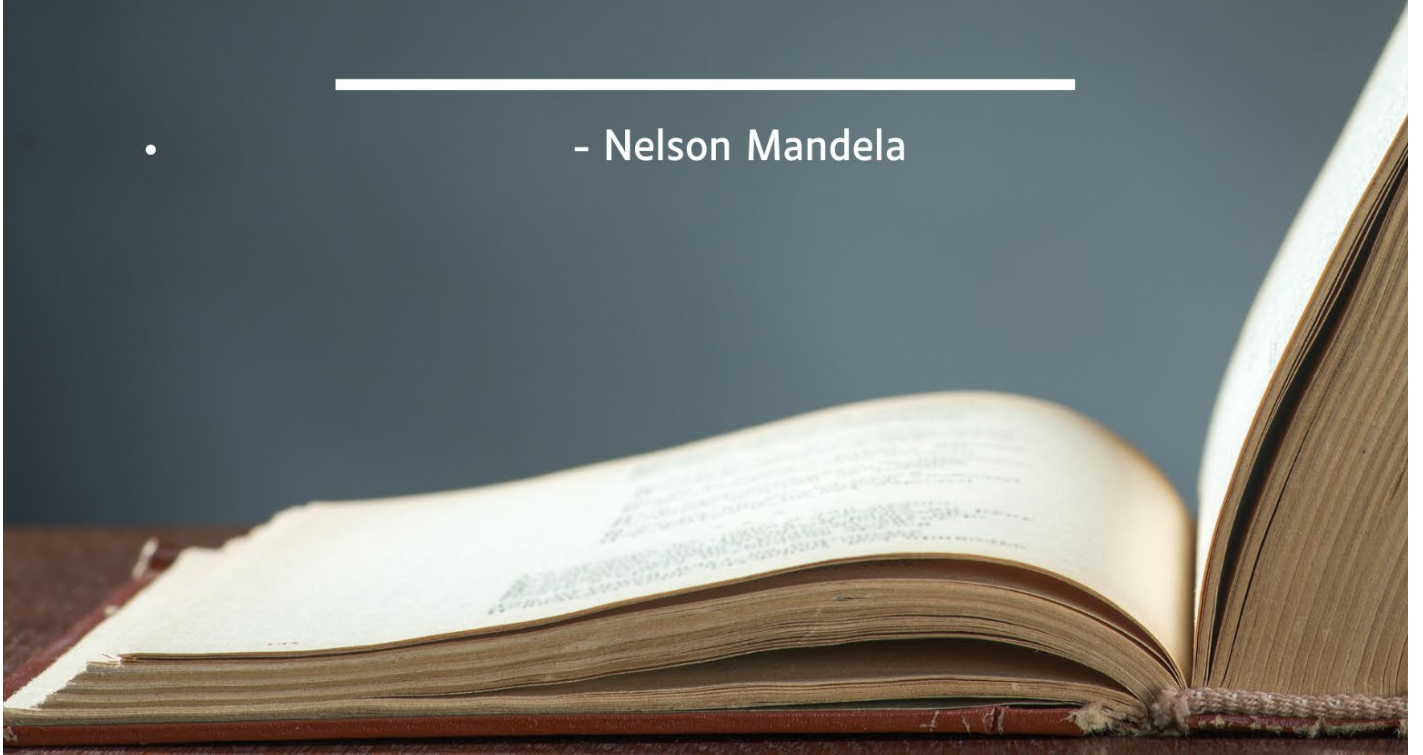
Mentor Teachers

All Teaching Excellence candidates pursuing certification will be assigned a Mentor Teacher. The Mentor Teacher is a knowledgeable, experienced, highly proficient teacher who works with and alongside you as you learn the ropes of teaching. A mentor is not an instructor and the candidate is not a student – he or she is a colleague. Mentors know a great deal about teaching and learning, students, parents and the school, which often leads to a kind of practical wisdom that can't be printed in a book – this knowledge and know-how is invaluable to new teachers. Mentor Teachers also act as a support system you can lean on when times get tough—and, knowing they've been through the certification process, too, means that your Mentor Teacher can help guide you through your journey!

“

EDUCATION IS THE MOST
POWERFUL WEAPON
WHICH YOU CAN USE TO
CHANGE THE WORLD

• - Nelson Mandela



Certification Areas

Teaching Excellence offers teacher certification in the following content areas. View the content areas from the list below to view specific requirements and the subjects that can be taught by the specific certification. Please note: it's always best practice to follow up with your campus administration and school leader to determine your teacher placement based on your certification area. These General Teacher Placements noted below are nonspecific to individual campuses and districts partnered with Teaching Excellence.

Certification Area	General Teaching Placements
Art EC-12	Art
Core Subjects 4-8	Middle School ELA, Science, Math, and Social Studies
Core Subjects EC-6	6th Grade ELA, Science, Math, and Social Studies
Dance 6-12	High School Dance
ELAR 4-8	Middle School ELA, M.S. Reading Intervention (first choice is Core Subjects 4-8)
ELAR 7-12	High School ELA, Seminar, H.S. Reading Intervention, College Counseling
History 7-12	7-12 History (first choice is Social Studies 7-12)
LOTE French EC-12	MS or HS French
LOTE Mandarin Chinese EC-12	MS or HS Chinese
LOTE Spanish EC-12	MS or HS Spanish
Life Science 7-12	Grades 7-12 Biology or Ecology (first choice is Science 7-12)
Math 4-8	MS Math (not Algebra), MS Math Intervention (first choice is Core Subjects 4-8)
Math 7-12	High School Math, Algebra, HS Math Intervention
Music EC-12	MS or HS Music, Orchestra, Choir
Physical Education EC-12	MS or HS PE (this certification area does not cover Health electives)
Physical Science 7-12	MS or HS Physics or Chemistry (first choice is Science 7-12)

Science 4-8	Middle School Science (first choice is Core Subjects 4-8)
Science 7-12	High School Science
Social Studies 4-8	Middle School Social Studies (first choice is Core Subjects 4-8)
Social Studies 7-12	High School Social Studies
Special Education EC-12	Learning Lab Specialist, MS or HS SPED
Technology Applications EC-12	Computer Lab
Theatre EC-12	MS or HS Theatre
Health or Seminar	MS/HS

Program Costs

Teaching Excellence fees are broken down below, including costs for programming and certification.

Our Program Fees

Teaching Excellence costs for the candidate is \$5,500; the candidate's district picks up additional costs for programming.

All program fees are non-refundable. This is the anticipated cost for a candidate who completes all Teaching Excellence program requirements according to the program timeline.

How our Payment Plan works

- 1) Semi-monthly Payment Plan of \$275.00: Teaching Excellence costs are deducted from semi-monthly paychecks over a total of 20 deductions for Professional Learning and Coaching Support (\$5,500 total).
- 2) Failure to complete programming will lead to accruing continued support costs, \$1,500 paid through payroll deductions of \$75 for 20 pay periods.

Other Program Fees

Certification Fees

TEXES (cost per examination).....\$116

You must pass at least two certification tests (content area and PPR) prior to being recommended to the state for certification.

Examination fees payable to Education Testing Services.

Certification Fees - payable to SBEC (State Board of Education Certification)

Intern/Probationary Certificate Fee.....\$78

Standard Certificate Fee.....\$78

Renewal Fees

If you do not complete the program requirements by the end of your internship year, you must apply for a continuation. If the continuation is approved, you must pay a Continued Support Fee to be eligible to participate in the program.

Continued Support Fee.....\$1,500