

Guidance for Employees Seeking Teaching Certification

I. Seeking Teaching Certification

- For information and guidance on acquiring Georgia teacher certification, please refer to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) website (www.gapsc.com). For specific information on certification requirements, link to [Become a Georgia Educator](#).
- Employees seeking placement in CCSD for student teacher, field observation, internship and practicum experiences should request that their college or university field placement coordinator contact Rebecca Carlisle, Supervisor of Recruitment and Retention in the Office of Human Resources, at Rebecca.Carlisle@CherokeeK12.net to make the request.
- Field experiences must be cleared through the Office of Human Resources. Experiences cannot interfere with regular work-day assignments and responsibilities as a CCSD employee.

II. Request for Placement

- The Office of Human Resources must receive an emailed request from the college or university detailing the following:
 - Candidate Name
 - Candidate Email
 - Candidate PSC Number (if applicable)
 - Degree Program
 - Start/End Date of Placement
 - Required Hours
 - Mentor Requirements
 - Any Other Requirements
- Employees who are interested in being considered for placement in CCSD must complete the CCSD Request for Placement Application. Directions on how to complete this application will be sent to the requesting college/university field placement coordinator.
- For priority consideration for placement in an educational field experience, completed forms with required documentation should be submitted to the Office of Human Resources by the following dates:
 - Fall Placement – April 15th
 - Spring Placement – November 15th

- A CCSD Criminal History Check must be completed prior to commencement of any student teaching, field observation, internship or practicum experience. The Office of Human Resources reserves the right to reject the request of any candidate who does not meet CCSD minimum criminal history requirements. The Criminal History Check consent form is included in the candidate's Request for Placement Application.
- The Office of Human Resources reserves the right to reject a placement request based on confidential references and/or based on previous work experiences with CCSD.

III. Placement Guidelines

- CCSD employees enrolled in a college/university with a current CCSD Partnership Agreement referencing student teacher, field observations, internships and practicum experiences will receive priority consideration for placement.
- Employees enrolling/enrolled in programs at other colleges or universities may be considered, but their placement will be contingent upon availability and will require prior approval by the Office of Human Resources.
- CCSD currently has active partnerships with the following colleges, universities and providers:

AFJROTC Skillbridge
 Augusta University
 Baylor University
 Berry College
 Blue Ridge Area Health (AHEC)
 Brenau University
 Chattahoochee Technical College
 Dalton State College
 Emerson College
 Emory University
 Iowa State University
 Georgia College and State University
 Georgia Department of Public Health
 Georgia Southern University
 Georgia State University
 Grand Canyon University
 Kennesaw State University

Liberty University
 Life University
 Mercer University
 New York University
 Piedmont College
 Reinhardt University
 University of Akron
 University of Georgia
 University of Nebraska Lincoln
 University of North Georgia
 University of Phoenix
 University of St. Augustine
 University of Tenn - Chattanooga
 University of West Georgia
 Valdosta State University
 Walden University
 Western Governors University

IV. Assignment of a Cooperating Teacher or Mentor

- The Office of Human Resources will work with the appropriate college/university field placement coordinator to assign approved candidates a Cooperating Teacher or Mentor.
- Placement is up to the discretion of the Office of Human Resources. Candidate preferences will be noted but may not always be accommodated based on the current mentor volunteer pool.
- The recommendation and approval process and assignment of a Cooperating Teacher or Support Staff Mentor is required prior to approval of a candidate's placement.
- Confirmation of placement will be sent to the college/university field placement coordinator, school administrative designee, and Cooperating Teacher or Mentor by the Office of Human Resources.

V. Professional Leave Guidelines for CCSD Employee Student Teaching/Internship

➤ Eligibility

- An authorized unpaid leave of absence for the purpose of completing Student Teaching requirements to attain initial GaPSC certification, may be granted to an employee who has completed three consecutive years of regular full-time CCSD service and has received a minimum of three consecutive proficient annual evaluations. All such leave of absence requests must be submitted using the [Student Teaching Leave Request Form](#) and approved in advance by the Office of Human Resources.
- Candidates will be chosen for such approved professional leave based on years of service, quality of past performance, relevancy of planned study to the CCSD educational program and date of application. Student Teaching placement will typically be made by the Office of Human Resources at a site different from the employee's current work location; and participants will not be compensated during such placement.
- Such leave may be granted for a period up to 16 weeks and shall not be granted to the same individual more than once.

➤ Ineligibility

- An employee who does not meet the eligibility requirements for an authorized unpaid leave of absence for completing Student Teaching or Practicum/Internship must resign from his/her assignment prior to the commencement of the placement and must reapply with CCSD if future employment is desired.

➤ **Requesting Leave**

- The employee will notify the immediate supervisor in writing of the desire to be considered for such leave upon completion of the CCSD Request for Placement Application; at least 90 calendar days prior to the date on which the leave would be scheduled to begin. Such notice shall include the following:
 - Statement of the purpose of the leave;
 - Timeframe involved/reported;
 - Name of fully accredited institution of higher learning where the study will take place;
 - Field of specialization;
 - Proof of admission to the program; and,
 - Letter from program advisor outlining the approved program of study.

➤ **Maintaining Leave Status**

- If, at any time during the student teaching experience, the college/university reports unsatisfactory performance, such leave may be terminated by the Office of Human Resources immediately.

➤ **Returning from Leave**

- Upon completion/expiration of the approved leave and upon presentation of documentation to the Office of Human Resources demonstrating satisfactory completion of the course of study, such employee will be returned to the same or an equivalent position the employee held immediately prior to the leave of absence. If an equivalent position is offered to the employee and refused, the District will have no further obligation to reinstate the employee.
- Except because of documented illness or incapacity, failure to devote the entire period of leave to the purpose for which leave was granted shall constitute grounds for forfeiture of reinstatement rights.

➤ **Employee Benefits While on Leave**

- While accumulated vacation leave, if applicable, may be used during the period of an approved leave of absence in this regard; vacation and sick leave benefits do not continue to accrue during such leave.
- Employees on such approved leave continue to have employee and dependent insurance coverage and all other Board approved benefits; however, the employee is responsible for paying health (and other) insurance premiums for continuation of coverage during the period of leave in accordance with established CCSD rates and guidelines.

VI. Completion of Teaching Certification

- Upon completion of an approved student teaching program or degree, the employee may become eligible for and apply for any open position meeting their qualifications.
- Candidates with Bachelor's degrees who are enrolled in a certification program are welcome to apply to open certified positions.

VII. Paraprofessionals Seeking Teaching Certification

- The positions eligible to participate in general education elementary teacher certification programs are PreK Paraprofessionals, Kindergarten and Supportive Instruction Paraprofessionals at the preschool or elementary level. Self-Contained Special Education Paraprofessionals as well as IEP One-on-One Paraprofessionals are NOT eligible.
- The positions eligible to participate in certain special education teacher certification programs are Self-Contained Special Education Paraprofessionals. PreK Paraprofessionals, Kindergarten and Supportive Instruction Paraprofessionals at the preschool or elementary level, and IEP One-on-One Paraprofessionals are NOT eligible.
- The principal must agree to allow the education program student to complete his or her student teaching in their assigned classroom(s).
- The principal must agree to allow the lead teacher(s) to flip responsibilities with the education program student during student teaching hours.
- The lead teacher(s) must agree to be a mentor for the education program student.
- The principal must allow the education program student to switch responsibilities with another paraprofessional in the building in order to meet required observation hours per semester.
- The principal has the discretion to decline recommendation for any paraprofessional who desires participation in the education program.
- The education program student must be enrolled in a program in which CCSD has an existing partnership agreement (see list above).
- If field experience hours are required in a setting outside of elementary school, education program students must take personal time to complete these hours.

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