



Educator Preparation Provider/Local Education Agency
State Recognized Partnership Agreement

Educator Preparation Provider (EPP)	Tennessee State University (TSU)
Local Education Agency (LEA)	Rutherford County Schools (RUCS)
Academic Year of Agreement	2025-2026

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Certification (signatures verify partnership)	
EPP Head Administrator: Dr. Janet Finch	Title: Dean, College of Education
Signature: 	Date: 9/5/2025
LEA Head Administrator: Dr. James Sullivan	Title: Director of Schools
Signature: 	Date: 9/5/2025



Prompt 1	Describe the strategies and actions in place to co-select clinical educators and collaborate to prepare, evaluate, and support high-quality clinical educators, both provider and school-based, who demonstrate a positive impact on candidates' development and pre-k-12 students. <i>NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.</i>
	Tennessee State University (TSU) and Rutherford County School System (RUCS) have a history of collaboration in preparing high-quality teachers. This collaboration includes co-selecting clinical educators and collaborating to prepare, evaluate, and support these educators. SELECTION PROCESS: Adhering to the recommendations of the Tennessee Department of Education, school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers) and provider-based clinical educators (master clinicians) criteria include, but are not limited to, years of experience, areas of licensure/endorsement, highly effective performance (based on previous year performance review), commitment to being a mentor, mentor training, and demonstrated ability to work as a team member. Additionally, these criteria comply with the requirements stipulated in Educator Preparation Policy 5.504 in determining placements and creating and implementing a common process for selecting clinical mentors. The EPP developed a process for the selection of provider-based clinical supervisors and will obtain RUCS's agreement on the identified process. Moreover, in accordance with the policy, all school-based clinical mentors selected and provider-based clinical educators will hold licensure with endorsement in the supervising area. PREPARATION: The partnership will implement a common process for preparing school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers). This will include a virtual orientation mentor training that all school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers) must attend. This training will be conducted twice per academic year (fall and spring) and will be facilitated by members of the EPP and RUCS partnership. Content will include, but not be limited to, an overview of TSU and RUCS handbooks, edTPA, and the co-teaching model. The roles and responsibilities of school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers) will be developed by the TSU/RUCS partnerships and will be aligned to the TEAM rubric. These roles and responsibilities will be outlined in the TSU Mentor Teacher handbook. Participants will complete an evaluation of this training to assist the partnership in continually improving its preparation for school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers). Mentor teachers receive a stipend from TSU each semester a candidate is hosted. EVALUATION/OBSERVATION: The partnership will utilize the TSU assessment tool for school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers) to receive actionable feedback for improving the ways in which they implement their roles and responsibilities. In addition, the partnership will honor district protocol for a collaborative conversation between school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers) and provider-based clinical educators that focuses on ways clinical educators (mentor teachers) can best support teacher candidates. Actionable feedback for improvement should be based on improving the mentor teacher's ability to perform assigned roles and responsibilities. Provider-based clinical educators (master clinicians) will be observed by teacher candidates and school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers) throughout all aspects of the clinical experience. Teacher Candidates and school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers) will provide actionable feedback based on these observations to the provider-based clinical educators (master clinicians) at the completion of each experience or sooner based on the nature of the observation. The TSU and RUCS core partnership members will review assessment feedback annually. SUPPORT: The TSU/RUCS partnership will advocate for regular conversations between provider-based clinical educators (master clinicians) and school-based clinical mentors (mentor teachers) to allow for reflection and focused support for the educator candidate (teacher candidate). The provider-based clinical educators will meet monthly with the TSU field placement and clinical experience coordinator and the director of teacher education to review their experiences and obtain constructive feedback. TSU has already established annual focus groups that allow both groups of clinicians to share their challenges and successes with the mentoring experience. In addition, TSU partners with the Tennessee Education Association (TEA) to host virtual edTPA workshops as a supplement to seminar course for portfolio submission. This activity provides an opportunity for TSU to assist in providing additional information and guidance to the mentors in becoming more effective clinicians. Further, TSU will sponsor one Praxis support workshop to offer relief to educators seeking to complete licensure requirements in critical need areas. These efforts honor a sincere partnership between TSU/RUCS to strengthen the pipeline of certified educators within the district.



Prompt 2	Describe the design and implementation of clinical experiences, utilizing various modalities, of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on pre-k-12 students (For instructional leader programs, ensure how clinical experiences allow opportunities for candidates to practice applications of content knowledge and skills.). <i>NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.</i>
	The TSU/RUCS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) addresses the mutually-agreed upon design of clinical experiences to ensure educator candidates (teacher candidates) demonstrate developing effectiveness and positive impact on students' learning/development aligned with CAEP, TN Standards, and the TEAM Evaluation. The MOU will be maintained on file with the Director of Schools and reviewed annually by the district and EPP. The TSU/RUCS partnership ensures the following: 1. Programs meet expectations for clinical practice as outlined in the educator preparation policy (5.504); 2. Educator candidates (teacher candidates) have regular and consistent opportunities to experience clinical experiences, including the minimum number of hours or days (as required) for both field experiences and the clinical practice, for all programs; 3. Instructional Leadership candidates are collaboratively mentored to ensure that they are prepared to address the needs of all students by monitoring their internship experiences to reflect sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence and duration; 4. Educator candidates (teacher candidates) have regular and consistent opportunities to observe and practice in a variety of settings (within and across schools, during different times of day, across different types of instruction and school/classroom composition) to adequately cover the breadth of the endorsement; and 5. Specifically. candidates in the TSU Educator Preparation Program complete two years of preparation. DEPTH: Educator candidates (teacher candidates) will have opportunities to observe; tutor, through both individual and small group delivery; deliver instruction; and review and collect assessment data in frequent, varied, intentionally planned experiences. COHERENCE: Attention to the goals of each field/clinical experience will be sequenced to ensure developmental progression of the educator candidate (teacher candidate) across the continuum of their program. Coursework is designed to develop the requisite knowledge and skills to prepare candidates to become effective educators in their selected areas. BREADTH: EPP faculty, with the support of LEA partners will design/develop clinical experiences that include teaching and professional experiences reflecting appropriate content and pedagogical models across diverse school/classroom communities and curriculum. Residency II, Clinical Practice, or Student Teaching will allow candidates to experience a wide variety of settings and address the instructional needs of diverse students. Candidates will prepare lessons requiring an extensive understanding of the content area. Moreover, candidates will be required to differentiate instruction, teaching to students with learning challenges as well as gifted students. As further evidence of competency, candidates will be expected to demonstrate meaningful and effective utilization of technology to facilitate learning among their students. DURATION: Field experiences are designed and varied regarding the time in various settings based on the goals of preparing successful first-year teachers. Field and clinical experiences will span across a two-year period, ranging from limited classroom observations to full-year co-teaching. Candidates will complete a full-year residency in a school setting. Additionally, in the Pre-Residency year, candidates will observe/participate in selected school sites depending on the subject course taken at the time (e.g., Exceptional Children). DIVERSITY: Teacher and instructional leadership candidates will have regular opportunities to observe and practice in a variety of settings (across different schools, classrooms, types of instruction, and times of day) to adequately cover the breadth of the endorsement and ensure exposure to varied school communities. Instructional Leadership candidates complete two years of clinical preparation. Each practicum course requires the candidate to complete a set of activities reflective of the accompanying courses based on the state (TILS) and national (PSEL) standards to incorporate a continuum of appropriate knowledge and skills. Clinical activities vary by placement of the candidate to allow maximum flexibility for clinical mentors to provide experiences to candidates based on the specific nature of the school site, grade level, and community. Candidates also complete clinical experiences in schools with a diverse student population to provide adequate breadth for the endorsement. The culminating practicum accompanies a principalship based course designed to enhance instructional leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities at the level of the candidate's interest (elementary, middle or high school).