

Important Internship Placement Info For General Education Students Who Are District Employees

Prior to beginning SPU's program, paraeducators should confirm that their building administration and mentor(s) are supportive of the increased responsibility they will need to assume during internship. Mentors will stay actively engaged with our co-teaching model; however, it is sometimes difficult for candidates to be seen as a full *teacher* when they have been working within the classroom in a paraeducator role. An open discussion about this before any final arrangements are made is highly encouraged. Additionally, candidates must inquire with their administration about district policy, as some districts require a short leave during independent student teaching.

If a candidate has been working as a paraeducator in one classroom when admitted into the program but may be assigned to another classroom in the building or district once a new school year begins, they should keep in close communication with SPU's placement coordinator during the placement process.

Many candidates and mentor teachers have questions about how much time should be spent in each setting, as well as distinctive features between the two. Here are some key points to consider when working out a schedule:

- Most importantly, each student teaching experience should provide an authentic and well-supported learning opportunity for the candidate. We offer guidelines that are flexible so that mentors/mentees can design the best schedule for their team within the parameters of state and program internship requirements.
- Whatever a candidate's assignment may be as a paraeducator, it will be important from Day One to begin thinking more broadly outside of that role, and for candidate's to confer with their mentor teachers about how to observe and practice the more whole-group tasks of a teacher.
- The co-teaching model will be a great resource. Field supervisors will provide tools and strategies for how candidates can work with the mentors to meet the needs of their students, their job, and internship requirements.
- Candidates should talk with their mentors or administrators about district policy regarding "lead" or independent teaching time, and collaborate with their mentor on when this will happen. Their internship activity timeline can offer a general plan.
- Independent student teaching is the period of time where the candidate takes the lead in terms of planning, instruction, and assessment, though the mentor is still actively engaged. It can be flexible based on the needs of the students, the school calendar, and curricular considerations. **AMAT** candidates typically teach 10-12+ weeks, and **MAT** students teach 4-6+ weeks. Though encouraged, these weeks do not need to be consecutive. NOTE: If the district requires candidates to take a leave of absence, a 6-week leave is sufficient for any program.
- ***When candidates have determined the best schedule for their internships, they should provide all information to SPU's Placement Coordinator by email.***