Field Placement Criteria

## Dear Candidates,

## The primary objective of field placements (practicum and student teaching) is to provide teacher candidates with opportunities to plan, practice and reflect on methods of instruction and differentiation in order to develop the knowledge and skills to reach and support the learning of a wide range of students. The program follows several sets of guidelines to accomplish this goal.

## First, we consider the MiT Conceptual Framework and the mission of the MiT Program.

## Second, certification programs must follow state regulatory standards for field placements per WAC 181-78A-125 including establishing formal agreements with schools districts that:

* identify the program personnel who are authorized to request a placement,
* identify the district personnel to whom those requests should be made, and
* specify that candidates will not be placed in situations in which personal relationships or previous experiences could interfere with objective evaluation.

Third, Standard 4 - Program Design – from WAC 181-78A-220(4) also guides placement decisions for programs by instructing that “field experiences provide opportunity to work in communities with populations dissimilar to the background of the candidate” and “Mentors must be fully certificated school personnel and have a minimum of three years of professional experience in the role they are supervising.”

Finally, placements are also determined by district availability and approval.

To ensure that we meet the program’s goals for candidates’ development as well as state requirements, the Education Field Placement Officer initiates all discussions about placements. Each district has its own protocols and processes and it is the Education Field Placement Officer’s job to facilitate discussions between the program and the district.

Candidates are not to initiate discussions about placements, whether about a practicum or student teaching placement, with possible mentors or district personnel. Nor should they request placements from the faculty or the Education Field Placement Officer based on convenience or desired target areas for employment.

Field placements are determined using the following process:

1. The Education Field Experience Officer sends out a Field Placement Survey that helps identify candidates’ strengths and areas in which they need additional experience. The survey data is analyzed and the Education Field Experience Officer confers with the Program Director and MiT Cohort Faculty to confirm where placements should be made.
2. The Education Field Experience Officer then works with the school districts to find the best placements.
3. The Education Field Experience Officer notifies candidates of their placements and responsibilities for contacting mentors.

To make placements, the Education Field Experience Officer Field considers the following school characteristics in relationship to candidates’ experiences: i) urban, rural, and suburban demographics; ii) socio-economic populations in the school; (iii) racial and ethnic group composition of the school, and, (iv) representation of linguistic groups and students with special needs. All criteria will be taken into account to find placements that will help candidates develop as excellent educators.

For candidates who are currently paraprofessionals, the program will seek to arrange for the *initial practicum placement* to be in the candidates’ current classrooms if that is the person’s wish. These placements, however, must meet the following criteria: i) the placement must be in a classroom with a certified teacher with three years experience in the relevant endorsement area; ii) the paraprofessional may not be paid for the time designated as a practicum; and, iii) the paraprofessional is responsible for completing all program assignments related to the practicum. Also, at least one practicum or student teaching placement will still need to be in a setting that is dissimilar from the candidates’ experiences and that is not in “situations in which personal relationships or previous experiences could interfere with objective evaluation” (WAC 181-78A-125).

Examples of placements for other candidates might include the following:

* If a teacher candidate grew up in Seattle and attended or worked in schools that primarily served upper middle class students with little linguistic diversity, one placement *might* be similar to her/his previous experiences. However, other possible placements *might* be in a rural school serving working class, linguistically diverse students or in an urban or suburban school serving diverse ethnic and racial populations with a range of academic needs.
* If a candidate attended or worked in urban schools with diverse ethnic, linguistic, and working or middle class students, one placement *might* be similar to her/his previous experiences. However, other possible placements *might* be in a school that includes students from upper middle class backgrounds or in a school that serves students who have grown up in rural communities.

The list of school districts with which Evergreen has field placement agreements can be found on the program website at: <http://www.evergreen.edu/mit/placement/districts.htm>. If a candidate seeks approval to be placed in a district not on this list, the candidate must have strong justification and seek timely approval from the MiT director, faculty and the Education Field Experience Officer. Candidates are asked to remember that the justification should not be based on convenience or a desired target area for future employment.

Sincerely,

Loren Petty, Education Field Experience Officer

Sherry Walton, Director, Evergreen Teacher Education Programs