

Selecting & Supporting High-Quality Supervising Practitioners

The Supervising Practitioner (SP) plays a critical role in a teacher candidate's field-based experience by providing a model of high-quality practice and a link between theory and the realities of a PK-12 classroom. In the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP), the SP is both coach and evaluator, assessing the teacher candidate's practice on the Six Essential Elements while also providing the feedback and support that a candidate needs to improve.

This Implementation Brief addresses how educator preparation providers and districts can identify and support high-quality SPs through:

Did you know?

- ✓ Student teachers are **3x** more likely to teach in the district where they complete a practicum.
- ✓ A high-quality Supervising Practitioner is one of the strongest predictors of teacher candidates' later effectiveness.



1. Clear Expectations

Explicitly articulating the responsibilities of the role prior to selection and placement.

2. Strategic Selection

Working with K-12 partners to select and place candidates with SPs that will effectively support their growth and improvement.

3. Ongoing Support & Development

Creating opportunities to develop and recognize SPs as teacher educators.

1. Clear Expectations

The first step in identifying talented, qualified SPs is clearly defining the role and the responsibilities associated with the position at the outset. By articulating expectations upfront through position descriptions, screening conversations, and initial training, ed prep providers and districts can identify SPs who understand and are prepared to meet the requirements and the responsibilities of their role.

As outlined in the [CAP guidelines](#), the specific responsibilities of a Supervising Practitioner include:

- ✓ **Provide consistent guidance, support, and high-quality feedback** to the teacher candidate that improves practice;
- ✓ **Assess and document evidence of teacher candidate readiness** across the Six Essential Elements of CAP;
- ✓ **Identify appropriate assessment(s) to measure candidate impact on student learning** and support the candidate to set goals and collect and analyze data;
- ✓ **Conduct at least three observations**, including pre- and post-observation conferences, and collect, synthesize, and analyze evidence of practice relative to the Six Essential Elements;
- ✓ **Calibrate observations and feedback** with the Program Supervisor to ensure consistent messaging and targeted feedback to the candidate;
- ✓ Support the teacher candidate in **administering student feedback surveys**;
- ✓ **Participate in Three-Way Meetings** with the Program Supervisor and candidate to discuss evidence collected to date, set goals, evaluate progress, and determine plans for ongoing improvement;
- ✓ **Determine, in collaboration with the Program Supervisor, whether the candidate is ready to teach.**

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In addition, defining the SP role as a teacher educator strengthens the connection between PK-12 schools and ed prep providers. Prospective SPs should also be prepared to demonstrate and develop the practices, skills, and characteristics of an effective teacher educator, including:

- ✓ **Constructing coherent learning experiences** for the teacher candidate that bridge theory and practice and provide him/her the opportunity for authentic assessment of teaching practice;
- ✓ **Modeling professional expectations** including commitment to high standards, collaboration with colleagues, inclusive practice, data-informed decision-making, and continuous learning;
- ✓ **Facilitating candidate practice** through high-quality models, unpacking of teaching into explicit practices, and multiple opportunities for mastery; and
- ✓ **Providing high-quality feedback**, consistent and continuous communication, and evidence-based judgments.

2. Strategic Selection

In order to ensure that candidates are placed in settings that will result in an effective field-based experience, ed prep providers should work closely with partner districts to carefully select SPs who are not just highly effective teachers but also willing and able to serve in this teacher educator role.

When ed prep providers and districts co-develop selection criteria, they are able to jointly identify the requisite skills and competencies that define a high-quality SP. In addition to the [regulatory requirements](#), responsibilities and skills listed above, partnerships may identify additional expectations of supervising practitioners that are specific to the ed prep program, school or district setting, such as prior experience hosting student teachers in pre-practicum, or demonstrated success mentoring novice teachers.

Strategically placing teacher candidates with high quality SPs helps ensure that teacher candidates have the opportunity to learn from and add value to that teacher's classroom, and to receive the support and feedback that they need to be ready for day one. Beyond grade-level and content area, placement considerations include school and classroom climate as well as the SP's propensity to deliver constructive feedback and serve as a model of high-quality practice for the candidate.

Spotlight Practice: Focus on Dispositions.

Boston University and three Boston Public Schools partner schools co-developed [selection criteria](#) for Supervising Practitioners in their student teaching placement network. These criteria center on specific dispositions and skills paramount to preparing candidates for an urban, high-need setting. "We don't just look for the best teachers, but those positioned to be teacher educators," says Andrea Bien, Clinical Assistant Professor at Boston University. The partnership prioritizes the ability to deliver actionable feedback, a willingness to make their own teaching practice transparent, and openness to engage in reflection and continuous learning. "It was a helpful exercise to sit down as two organizations and name together what we think is important," says Bien. "There's more investment that way."

Spotlight Practice: Placements Based on Mutual Fit. In Curry College's post-baccalaureate programs, candidates complete an application for the field-based experience indicating their professional growth goals and districts of interest. After soliciting recommendations from principals, Curry has conversations with prospective SPs to discuss the expectations for the role and their experience with delivering and receiving feedback. As Michelle LeBlanc, Chairperson of the Education Department, shared, "I always ask 'Tell me about some specific feedback you've received from a colleague or administrator that's really improved your practice, [and] how would you convey feedback that wasn't as positive?'" In making placement decisions, Curry pays careful attention to mutual fit in order to ensure that candidates are placed in practicum and pre-practicum environments with SPs who will effectively support their growth and development.

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3. Ongoing Support & Development

By developing Supervising Practitioners' skills as teacher educators, ed prep providers and districts can jointly build leadership pipelines and strengthen the quality of preparation for the next generation of teachers.

Spotlight Practice: Data-Driven Training.

UMass Amherst employs a combination of on-site training (at the organization and at the school site) and video-conferencing throughout the year and regularly surveys participants to measure the effectiveness of their training, using the data to continually refine their approach. As field placement coordinator, Ann Stephany, shared, "By the end of the year, we found extremely effective ways to do trainings of our supervisors...in ways that were individualized to their needs, were the most effective use of time, and increased the understanding of participants throughout CAP."

Training Models

Beyond initial training on the CAP process, recognizing SPs as teacher educators necessitates the implementation of an intentional scope and sequence of training and professional development designed to build SP skills around constructing meaningful learning experiences, modeling professional expectations, facilitating practice, and providing high quality feedback.

In recognition of the many demands on Supervising Practitioners' time, ed prep providers benefit from offering training using multiple formats and modalities, depending on the time of year and the goals of the training. Training is not one-size-fits-all and should be tailored to the size of the organization, the geography of student teaching placements, and the needs of the supervisors.

Incentives

According to ESE's Stakeholder Survey, SPs asked why they choose to serve in this role most often cite the joy of working with student teachers (selected by 75%), the desire to support the next generation of teachers (75%) and their own professional development (58%) rather than the financial support they receive for participating (8%).

However, other, more extrinsic incentives can also help recruit and retain SPs, such as:

- ✓ Supervising Practitioner role as formalized career ladder opportunity
- ✓ Access to discounted coursework through the ed prep provider
- ✓ Recognition through educator evaluation (see sidebar)
- ✓ Supervisor Certification ([Pilot 2016-17](#))
- ✓ [Up to 30 Professional Development Points](#) (PDPs)
- ✓ Stipends

TIP: Recognizing the Supervising Practitioner in Educator Evaluation

As models of high-quality practice for teacher candidates, Supervising Practitioners have the opportunity to demonstrate Exemplary performance on many indicators and elements of the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and particularly, the Six Essential Elements of the CAP Rubric:

I.A.4 Well-Structured Lessons
I.B.2 Adjustments to Practice
II.A.3 Meeting Diverse Needs
II.B.1 Safe Learning Environment
II.D.2 High Expectations
IV.A.1 Reflective Practice

Next Steps & Considerations

ESE recommends that ed prep providers and districts convene as partnership teams to develop and refine a strategy for selecting, training, and recognizing Supervising Practitioners.

Partnerships should consider the following:

- What are the skills and dispositions paramount to preparing candidates to teach in this specific setting?
- What training and ongoing professional development is necessary to develop Supervising Practitioners as teacher educators?
- How can the SO and District appropriately recognize Supervising Practitioners for their work?



Tools and resources available to support this partnership work include:

- [Supervising Practitioner Position Description Template](#)
- [Teacher Educator Effectiveness Practices Framework](#)
- [Supervising Practitioner Selection Criteria \(Sample from BU/BPS\)](#)
- [CAP Training for Supervisors \(Sample from UMass Amherst\)](#)
- [Supervisor Training Feedback Survey \(Sample from UMass Amherst\)](#)
- [Online Calibration Training Tool](#)
- [Student Teaching Partnership Toolkit](#)