Mentor Teacher Summary: IUP Student Teaching Handbook 2026-2027

This summary highlights the key information that mentor teachers need to know when hosting and supporting an IUP student teacher. Information is drawn from EPP Student Teaching Handbook 26-27.docx.

Purpose of Student Teaching

Student teaching is the capstone clinical experience in IUP's educator preparation programs. Candidates spend a full semester applying their content knowledge and teaching skills under the guidance of:

A mentor teacher
A university supervisor

The goal is to help candidates develop classroom instruction, management, assessment, professionalism, and reflective practice skills while demonstrating positive impact on P-12 student learning.

Qualifications of Mentor Teachers

To serve as a mentor teacher, individuals must generally:

Hold Level II Pennsylvania certification.
Have at least 3 years of teaching experience.
Have taught at least 1 year in their current grade level or assignment.
Be recommended by their district administration.
Be willing to mentor, collaborate, provide feedback, and evaluate candidates.

Before the Placement Begins

Mentor teachers should:

Meet with the assigned student teacher before the semester begins.
Discuss expectations, classroom procedures, curriculum, and responsibilities.

Sign the Mentor Teacher-Student Teacher Signature Form.
Help establish a professional working relationship and introduce the candidate to the school community.

Mentor Teacher Responsibilities

Orient the Candidate

During the first days, help the student teacher become familiar with:

School policies and procedures
Emergency protocols
Classroom routines
Staff and building layout
Materials, resources, and instructional technology
Professional expectations and dress code

Support Gradual Release of Responsibility

Student teachers should gradually assume more teaching responsibility over time.

Mentors should:

Begin with observation and assisted teaching.
Increase teaching responsibilities as competence develops.
Encourage co-teaching where appropriate.
Eventually allow candidates to assume most or all instructional responsibilities for a period of time.

Review Lesson Plans

Mentor teachers must:

Review lesson plans before instruction.
Provide feedback and suggestions.
Ensure no lesson is taught without prior mentor review and approval.

Providing Feedback and Evaluation

Mentor teachers play a major role in candidate assessment.

Ongoing Feedback

Mentors should:

- Provide daily feedback when possible.
- Maintain anecdotal notes.
- Conduct formal written feedback at least weekly.
- Encourage reflection and professional growth.

Evaluations

Mentors collaborate with university supervisors to complete:

- Midterm evaluations
- Final evaluations
- Professional dispositions assessments

Evaluations are completed through Anthology Portfolio.

Working with the University Supervisor

The university supervisor serves as:

- Instructor of record
- Liaison between IUP and the school
- Observer and evaluator

Supervisors will:

- Conduct an introductory visit.
- Complete a minimum of four visits for full-semester placements (one initial visit plus at least three formal observations).
- Confer with both mentors and candidates.
- Collaborate on evaluation and grading.

Mentors are encouraged to communicate concerns or successes with the supervisor at any time.

Attendance and Absences

Student teachers are expected to:

- Follow the district calendar.
- Arrive on time.
- Attend every day unless excused.

If a candidate is absent:

- They must notify both the mentor teacher and university supervisor promptly.
- Absences must be documented on the Student Teacher Absence Form.

Excessive absences may require make-up days or other action.

Professional Expectations

Mentor teachers should reinforce expectations that candidates:

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Follow school policies.
- Dress professionally.
- Use appropriate language.
- Demonstrate ethical conduct.
- Maintain professional boundaries with students.
- Avoid social media, texting, or personal communication with students.
- Follow Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.

Concerns and Candidate Performance Issues

If concerns arise:

Document concerns promptly.
Discuss them directly with the candidate.
Notify the university supervisor.
Work collaboratively on improvement strategies.

The handbook includes formal processes for:

Dispositions Alerts
Corrective Action Plans
Removal from placement when necessary

Early communication is strongly encouraged.

Substitute Teaching During Student Teaching

A student teacher may substitute teach only under specific conditions, including:

District approval.
Positive recommendation from the mentor teacher and university supervisor.
Appropriate performance ratings.
Work only within their certification area and current placement building.
Compliance with PDE and IUP guidelines.

Student teachers may never be left in sole charge of a classroom without appropriate certified personnel present as required by policy.

Mentor Teacher Compensation

For 2026-2027:

Full semester placement: **$594.50**
Half semester placement: **$297.25**

To receive the honorarium, mentors must:

Complete mentor training at least once every 5 years.
Submit the required honorarium form to IUP.

Meet submission deadlines established by the Educator Preparation Office.

Key Takeaway for Mentors

The mentor teacher is the most influential school-based educator in the student teaching experience. Your primary responsibilities are to:

Model effective teaching.
Support gradual development of teaching responsibilities.
Review and approve lesson plans.
Provide frequent, honest feedback.
Collaborate with the university supervisor.
Assess professional growth and teaching competence.
Help the candidate transition from student to professional educator.