

3. Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

The professional education unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

3 a.: Collaboration between professional education unit and school partners

North Georgia RESA's Professional Learning Unit, its seven school district partners, and endorsement instructors design, deliver, and evaluate field experiences to help teacher candidates develop appropriate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. As collaborative partners, the RESA PLU, course instructors, system administrators and gifted endorsed teachers, all work toward the ultimate goal of helping all students learn at their optimal level.

Endorsement candidates are teachers who are already placed in a particular school building and grade level. Field experiences require release time for the teacher candidate to observe in other classrooms, and may even require candidates to visit other school buildings or even visit another school system. As part of the principal's recommendation, release time is a condition for approval of the teacher candidate's participation in the endorsement program (*Principal's Recommendation Form*).

System administrators and gifted endorsed teachers participate with the RESA Gifted Program specifically through providing opportunities for the teacher candidates to engage in meaningful field experiences. Experienced gifted endorsed teachers provide classroom observation opportunities for teacher candidates, as well as valuable information and feedback on best practices with gifted learners. System administrators also provide feedback as they evaluate teacher candidates during implementation of required course curricular tasks.

3 b.: Design, implementation, and evaluation of field experiences

Candidates in the Gifted Endorsement Program have ample opportunities to apply the principles and theories that form the core knowledge through well planned, sequenced field experiences. The field experiences are sequenced so that they have been presented and/or modeled through classroom or web-based instruction. A *Field Experience Tracking Matrix* will be used to ensure that candidates have completed all required field experience. The quality of the field experiences will be assessed through a variety of instruments including the *Field Experience Evaluation* form.

The RESA PLU, its seven school partners, and endorsement instructors design and evaluate field experiences to help candidates develop appropriate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Endorsement candidates are teachers who are already placed in a particular school building and grade level. Field experiences require release time for the teacher candidate to observe in other classrooms, and may even require candidates to visit other school buildings or even visit another school system in order to experience and/or observe diverse student populations and required

grade groupings. As part of the principal's recommendation, release time for field experiences was a condition for approval of the teacher candidate's participation in the endorsement program (*Principal's Recommendation*).

Consistent with the standards of the professional learning unit, field experiences are required so candidates will be able to apply principles learned in classroom instruction in order to honor the beliefs and commitments of the gifted endorsement program. This concrete application of theory into practice makes learning relevant by translating concepts into real-life experiences, which allows the candidates opportunity to refine the skills that they will later use in their classrooms.

Each course in the Gifted Endorsement Program requires field experiences. During the program, candidates will participate in a minimum of 15 hours of activities to meet field experience requirements. Each field experience requires a written product, which will be used to evaluate candidate competency. The products from field experiences will also be evaluated through a rubric and monitored to evaluate program effectiveness and future improvement of the course.

Coordination of field experiences will be a joint effort of system administrators, currently endorsed gifted teachers, candidates, and instructors in order to maximize the experience for the candidates and minimize the disruption for local school systems. Candidates will be required to participate in field experiences in each grade level group for which they are certified. For example, field experiences for a teacher certified in middle grades must include grades 4-5 and 6-8. Additionally, these experiences must include opportunities to observe/interact with diverse student groups, which will be documented and tracked on the *Field Experience Tracking Matrix*.

Mastery of essential skills developed in each course is largely measured through field experiences. Data relative to the candidates' mastery of the skills measured in the field experience are collected in a variety of ways both informally prior to the actual experience and formally after the experience. Interviews, observations, classroom discussions or web-based postings, lesson plans, are all means of obtaining information on candidates' acquisition of skills and dispositions.

Field experiences in the courses below include the following:

Characteristics of the Gifted

- Observe gifted students in classroom settings at required grade level groupings and in diverse populations
- View video tapes of gifted students in a classroom setting when available
- Interview two gifted students at different grade levels or two parents of gifted students

Curriculum for the Gifted

- Interview an endorsed teacher of the gifted
- Observe differentiated curriculum activity in a classroom with gifted students
- Design and implement differentiated lesson(s) for a variety of learning abilities
- Complete a review/reflection on the field experience and share for feedback

Methods & Materials for the Gifted

- Design and administer a pre-test to determine student mastery
- Design a differentiated unit
- Arrange observation of the candidate implementing differentiated unit with students
- Complete a review/reflection of the differentiated instruction and how improvements could be made to improve learning

Identification and Assessment of the Gifted

- Interview of school psychologist or psychometrist regarding testing and evaluation of students and appropriate instruments
- Complete a case study on a currently identified gifted student using testing and evaluation data, or complete a case study on a student who potentially demonstrates giftedness by administering appropriate tests and/or evaluation instruments. Both case studies would include recommendations regarding the student's educational needs based on interpretations of data and observations.

3 c.: Candidates' development and demonstration of knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help all students learn

The focus of N GA RESA's Gifted Endorsement Program is to develop gifted trained teachers who have the necessary knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions to help all students learn. To that end, teacher candidates are provided research articles on a variety of gifted education topics, trends, and issues. As candidates read and critique the information, they also must reflect on their practices within the classroom and how they could apply new learning. Instructors gain knowledge of the candidate's degree of understanding as they evaluate the candidate's written summary/critique through the *Literature Review Rubric*.

As part of the candidate's field experiences, he/she provides a written analysis of his/her evaluation of student learning during the planned activity or activities (*Candidate Curriculum Self-Evaluation & Reflection*). Reflections must also include ways to improve the lesson/unit in the future and how to improve student learning for the current topic and lesson objectives. These candidate reflections will be an important part of his/her demonstration of knowledge and dispositions impacting student learning.