



**GOBIERNO DE PUERTO RICO**  
**DEPARTAMENTO DE EDUCACION**

Office of the Secretary

July 30, 2012

**Policy Letter No. 2-2012-2013**

Associate Secretary, Sub-Secretaries, Associate Secretary for Special Education, Assistant Secretaries, Executive Director for the Administrative Training Institute and School Counseling, Interim Director for the Institute for the Professional Development of Teachers, Offices, Programs and Divisions Directors, Directors of the Educational Regions, General Supervisors, School Superintendents in charge of School Districts, School Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Zone Supervisors, Teacher Facilitators, School Directors and Cooperating Teachers from the teacher preparation practice centers.

**PUBLIC POLICY ASSOCIATED WITH THE NORMS WHICH GOVERN THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS OF THE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM**

The Teacher Preparation Program, housed under the Professional Development Institute for Teachers (INDEPM) from the Sub-Secretary of Academic Affairs of the Department of Education, is a basic component associated with one of the main commitments of the educational system: professional training of future teachers.

The legal bases underpinning the Program are the provisions of Law No. 79 of August 23, 1989, which authorizes the creation of Teaching Practice Centers. Similarly, it is supported by Law No. 149 of July 15, 1999, known as the Organic Act of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico. The legal requirements are effective through Regulation No. 4092 of January 19, 1990, Regulations for the Organization and Operation of Centers for Teaching Practice and this Policy Letter.

The vision of the Teacher Practice Teaching Program is to contribute to the training of future teachers in such a way that they can transform the society in which they live through their pedagogical practice. The mission of the Program is to join forces with accredited public and private universities to collaborate in the personal and professional development of cooperating teachers and student-teachers.

Similarly, the Program is committed to establishing effective Teaching Practice Centers which allow the student-teachers to apply the acquired knowledge and model learning and teaching strategies that meet the needs of new generations.

All university students interested in becoming a teacher must pass pre-practice experiences. These encourage students to begin the process of designing and developing teaching activities, while assessing their aspirations to become professional educators, in time clarifying their vocation. School directors will collaborate in this process, and will provide appropriate experiences in this regard during the period prior to the formal experience of the teaching practice.

A pre-practice experience must be approved by all college students who are interested in becoming teachers. Those experiences encourage students to begin the process of designing and developing teaching activities, at the same time they can evaluate their aspiration of beginning their professional formation, clarifying their vocation on a full-time basis. School directors will collaborate in this process and will provide appropriate experiences for this purpose during the period that precedes the formal experience of the teaching practice.

The pre-practice and teaching practice are the tools we use which ensure we form the best teachers for Puerto Rico. We aspire to have teachers with a mastery of their subject areas and continuous learning; teachers who know and implement innovations in the educational process, teachers who value diversity and collaborate as a learning community in which students, parents and the school community participate.

The teaching practice is a culminating laboratory experience, whereby the student-teacher assumes responsibility for teaching one or more subjects to groups of students at the elementary or secondary level, special needs, or perform tasks of direct service to the student which are complementary to teaching. It is one of the most important stages of learning for the student-teacher. Over time, the knowledge, values, attitudes and projections of the future teacher are strengthened. These aspects will be reflected in his/her work throughout their professional and personal life. Basically, in the professional preparation of student-teachers, the teaching practice is an essential phase in which all their theoretical knowledge and skills, acquired through their years of university study, is empirically manifested in a real-life setting.

Public and private universities, in coordination and collaboration with the Department of Education, assume responsibility for preparing future teachers. This relationship of mutual dependence requires a greater formality regarding clinical experiences that are obtained through the stages of pre-practice and formal practice.

Representatives from the university institutions who prepare teachers, in coordination with the personnel from the Teacher Preparation Program, will establish the centers of teaching practice, in accordance with the PRDE educational policy. To this end, the following norms have been established for the selection, organization and effective implementation of the teaching practice:

### **Selection of Teaching Practice Centers**

To select the school that will serve as a Teaching Practice Center, it must meet the following requirements:

- A. Comply with the provisions of Law No. 149 of July 15, 1999, known as the Organic Act of the Puerto Rico Department of Education.
- B. Evidence the implementation of the pedagogical policy established by the Department of Education.
- C. Have a faculty of renown professional and academic competence, which should be evidenced by the results of the evaluations carried out, strategies established for the cognitive and affective development of students, projects carried out and the quality of the activities.
- D. Integrate content standards and curriculum expectations of excellence in the planning of teaching and learning activities.
- E. Develop or participate in innovative curriculum projects.
- F. Establish strategies to find and use the necessary services in the integral development of the student in an adequate and effective way.
- G. Count on an available professional development program for cooperating teachers and student-teachers which is focused on their specific needs.
- H. Allow periodic class observations and other pre-practice and teaching practice experiences.
- I. Provide necessary technical assistance to staff members using the resources from schools, districts, and other system levels.
- J. Make available the necessary physical facilities, in accordance with the specific circumstances of the school core.

### **Selecting Cooperating Teachers**

In the selection of the cooperating teachers, the following will be taken into consideration: That he/she:

- A. Have the appropriate preparation and certification in the area and level they teach (highly-qualified teacher).
- B. Demonstrate mastery of the content area and / or subjects taught. In addition, they must demonstrate mastery of the content standards and expectations of the level which guide them.
- C. Know the curricular framework of the subject taught and implement it in the classroom.
- D. Enable the integration and participation of students, school personnel, parents and others in the educational process.
- E. Have at least three (3) years of experience as a classroom teacher on the level and subject area, and have passed the forty-five (45) hour preparatory course to practice as a cooperating teacher. The course will have a validity of five (5) years, after which the cooperating teacher should take a retraining of fifteen (15) hours to update the knowledge in related areas with DEPR Public Policy.
- F. Know the profile and professional standards established for teachers in Puerto Rico.
- G. Promote the development of human values fostered by our educational system: solidarity, respect for human dignity and appreciation of diversity.

H. Have a written recommendation from the director of the Teaching Practice Center where they will serve as a cooperating teacher, who shows proven professional competence, evidenced in visit reports, evaluation results, strategies and teaching techniques used, activities, projects, trainings and others.

I. Be able to effectively communicate via oral and written language, in Spanish and/or English.

J. Have a mastery of information and communication technologies.

K. Demonstrate enthusiasm for sharing their knowledge and to continue learning.

### **Duties of the School Superintendent**

These school officials are required to:

A. Uphold an environment of collaboration with universities with teacher preparation programs.

B. Collaborate, in coordination with the school director, in activities and meetings aimed at improving the performance of Teaching Practice Centers.

C. Promote and facilitate professional development for Cooperating Teachers.

### **Funciones de los Directores de los Centros de Práctica Docente**

#### **Duties of Directors at the Teaching Practice Centers**

**Regarding their professional activities, School Directors must:**

A. Facilitate professional development for the student-teacher.

B. Participate in the selection of cooperating teachers with the coordinators and supervisors of university teaching practice.

C. Provide orientation and inform the student-teacher regarding the composition and the social and physical environment of the Practice Center.

D. Participate in the planning, organization and development of professional activities designed for the student-teacher of the Teaching Practice Center.

E. Promote the implementation of educational policies from the Department of Education in the operation of the Teaching Practice Center and in the teaching process.

F. Enforce the provisions of the Regulations, Policy Letter and memorandums related to the operation of the Teaching Practice Program.

G. Foment student-teachers' participation in the Teaching Practice Centers activities.

H. Participate in technical assistance and supervision of the work performed by cooperating teachers and student-teachers.

I. Carry out at least one visit to observe student-teacher performance.

**Regarding the administrative aspect, School Directors must:**

- A. Adequately attend to and monitor the operations of the Teaching Practice Program.
- B. Authorize the placement of a maximum of two (2) student-teachers for each cooperating teacher by university per school semester.
- C. Maintain a record of the Teaching Practice Program which includes: a copy of the law or regulations, policy letters and memorandums, forms with information on cooperating teachers (Attachment 1), a record of student-teachers who have served for the past three (3) years, letters requesting permission for students to perform class observations.
- D. Participate in the student-teacher's placement process in conjunction with cooperating teachers, coordinators and teaching practice program supervisors of the universities or their representatives.
- E. Possess the knowledge of the documents used to evaluate the work of the student-teacher.
- F. Ensure the time needed for orientation, observation, execution and discussion with the student-teacher is included in the school organization.
- G. Prepare, complete all the parts required, and send out, on time, reports required by the Department of Education's Teaching Practice Program and by teacher training institutions which represent the student-teachers.

In the case of public higher education institutions (University of Puerto Rico, Conservatory of Music and School of Plastic Arts), the Teaching Practice Program processes the payment of stipends. The school directors that operated Practice Centers must send mid semester the List of Cooperating Teachers and Student-teachers (Appendix 2 and 3) before October 31 for the first semester, and before March 31st for the second semester. Documents delivered after the deadlines will not be processed for payment.

- I. Certify the number of teaching practice hours the student-teacher has had interacting with students and parents. Notify the university teaching practice coordinator or supervisor about possible changes in the school's schedule and operations, and any situation which may affect the student-teacher

**Duties of Cooperating Teachers**

**Cooperating teacher, in fulfillment of their duties must:**

- A. Promote a professional attitude of excellence and exhibit the professional teacher standards.
- B. Participate in educational committees and activities which contribute to their professional development, without disrupting or impairing their regular functions as a teacher at the Department of Education.
- C. Be a reflective and innovative researcher of the curriculum and teaching strategies, as well as exhibit the characteristics of an educator who follows the humanist and constructivist theories.
- D. Share responsibilities with the director and the teaching practice supervisor with

the organization of the work programmed and in the evaluation of the student-teachers.

**In their function of counseling student-teachers, the cooperating teacher must:**

- A. Promote the internalization of the vision and educational mission of the Department of Education, and orientate them regarding the professional standards.
- B. Facilitate and initiate their progressive and systematic adaptation to the school environment.
- C. Accept the cognitive-interactionist paradigm, through which learning occurs for both the student and the teacher, and cooperate in its implementation.
- D. Systematically provide orientation on the implementation of the principles governing the teaching and learning processes as well as their adjustments and innovations.
- E. Guide the student teacher to become cognizant of the current curricular framework, the standards of excellence of their subject area and the materials for professional use.
- F. Coordinate, along with the student-teacher, educational activities in tune with the new pedagogical approaches and particular needs of the students.
- G. Model educational techniques adapted to the nature of the subject, to the level and specific needs of their students.
- H. Orient student-teachers in the preparation and use of required records in fulfillment of their responsibilities.
- I. Provide the opportunity to develop their initiative in all teaching activities.
- J. Stimulate their participation in professional meetings, trainings and in other meetings in and out of the Teaching Practice Center.
- K. Orientate the student-teachers so they become familiar with and uses services offered by the Teaching Practice Center during their period of activities: orientation, social work, health, library, technological services and others.
- L. Provide opportunities to observe, plan, teach, and evaluate in diverse ways and use research-based strategies.
- M. Provide evidence of student-teacher performance using a variety of resources and authentic assessment tools.
- N. Orientate student-teachers on the current laws, policy letters and memoranda.
- O. Promote the use of technology, multimedia and resources available on the internet, especially from educational organizations that support teachers in updating and enriching the different content areas.
- P. Orientate student-teachers regarding parents' responsibilities and collaborations.
- Q. Promote the integration of content from diverse subject areas.
- R. Provide orientation with respect to diversity and the implementation of reasonable accommodations.

## General Provisions

- A. All institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs will submit their half-year reports and statistical summaries of student-teachers who met the requirements of teaching practice in November and May.
- B. Student-teachers shall dedicate a minimum of two hundred (200) hours of teaching practice in the classroom, except for institutions that have other regulations for the number of required hours established by their accrediting agencies.
- C. The teaching practice experience lasts one semester and trimestral or virtual online programs will not be accepted.
- D. The cooperating teacher will be responsible for the orientation, supervision and evaluation for a maximum of two (2) student-teachers, for each public or private university, per school semester.
- E. The rules and procedures described in this document also apply to the teacher orientation and modeling process offered to student-teachers from foreign or US universities.
- F. Personnel from the Teaching Practice Program at Central Administration will act as the representative of the Secretary in deliberations with superintendents and school directors to determine the closing or opening of the Centers. Given the need for practice centers, schools may function as such, as long as they have certified teachers, who meet the requirements set forth in this policy letter, as cooperating teachers.
- G. Policy letters or memoranda, related to the Procedure for Filing the Application for Validation of Instruments and Investigations in the Department of Education shall not apply to student-teachers who are carrying out their pre-practice or teaching practice.

This document repeals Policy Letter No. 10-2004-2005 or any other which is in partial or full conflict with the provisions set forth herein. I urge the faithful fulfillment of the specifications in the aforementioned.

Cordially

Edward Moreno Alonso, Ed. D.  
Secretary

### NOTA ACLARATORIA

Para propósitos de carácter legal en relación con la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, el uso de los términos maestro, director, estudiante-maestro, maestro cooperador, estudiante universitario, coordinadores, supervisores y cualquier otro que pueda hacer referencia a ambos sexos, incluye tanto al género masculino como al femenino.



Department of Education  
Assistant Secretary of Academic Affairs  
Institute for Professional Development of the Teacher  
Teaching Practice Program

### COOPERATING TEACHER INFORMATION FORM

This form is intended to gather information from teachers who work as cooperating teachers for different institutions of higher education. It is recommended that the school director keep this form available in his/her office, as well as documents evidencing the teacher's eligibility to practice as a cooperating teacher, as established in the Regulations for the Organization and Operations of Teaching Practice Centers and the current Policy Letter. This form may be reviewed by Department of Education staff or higher education institutions that have student teachers in the school.

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_  
School Region \_\_\_\_\_ School District \_\_\_\_\_  
Academic Degree Bachelor's \_\_\_\_ Master's \_\_\_\_ Doctorate \_\_\_\_  
Regular Teacher Certification \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject area you teach \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
Years of experience \_\_\_\_\_ HQT : \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_No  
Year in which you approved your cooperating teacher certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended to practice as a cooperating teacher by \_\_\_\_\_  
School Director

This form must include:

- Certificate or evidence of having passed the preparatory course for cooperating teacher or current certification.
- Recommendation from the Director of the Teaching Practice Center.
- Copies of current Regular Teacher Certificate (s)
- Reports of classroom visits
- Evaluations
- Evidence of specials activities or projects you have created
- List of professional development activities





Department of Education  
Institute for Professional Development of the Teacher  
PROGRAMA DE PRÁCTICA DOCENTE

**SEMESTRAL LIST OF DIRECTOR AND COOPERATING TEACHERS FROM TEACHER EXPERIENCES CENTER**

Teacher experience center: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_ School Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ RECINTO: \_\_\_\_\_

REGIÓN: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX Num.: \_\_\_\_\_ SEMESTER: 1RO \_\_\_\_\_ 2DO \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Last Name	Social Security	Number of Cooperating Teacher by Center	Number of Students attendend	Cooperating Teacher Certification Due date

I certify correct

\_\_\_\_\_  
SCHOOL DIRECTOR



Department of Education  
Institute for Professional Development of the Teacher  
PROGRAMA DE PRÁCTICA DOCENTE

**SEMESTRAL LIST OF DIRECTOR AND COOPERATING TEACHERS FROM TEACHER EXPERIENCES CENTER**

Teacher experience center: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_ School Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ RECINTO: \_\_\_\_\_

REGIÓN: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX Num.: \_\_\_\_\_ SEMESTER: 1RO \_\_\_\_\_ 2DO \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF STUDENT TEACHER	POSTAL ADDRESS	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	GRADE/LEVEL	SUBJECT	COOPERATING TEACHER

I certify correct

\_\_\_\_\_  
SCHOOL DIRECTOR