

## Law Regulating the Puerto Rico Department of Education's Clinical Education Experience Program

*Purpose:* Create the "Law Regulating the Puerto Rico Department of Education's Clinical Education Experience Program"; repeal Law No. 79 as approved and amended August 23, 1989, known as the "Law Regulating the Puerto Rico Department of Education's Teaching Practice Program"; and for other purposes.

### **Declaration of Motives**

The Clinical Education Experience is an essential part of Teacher, School Director, and Professional Counselor formation in the school environment, since this provides them the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed during their formal university preparation years. During the Clinical Experience or Internship, the candidate assumes the responsibilities inherent in his or her future profession in all aspects, as well as meeting a regular certification requirement in the corresponding category. The candidate should demonstrate a vocation, commitment, responsibility, enthusiasm, and solidarity for improving students' quality of life through effective pedagogical practice at all educational levels; pre-school, elementary school, and high school to be precise.

Since Law No. 79 regulating the Puerto Rico Department of Education's Teaching Practice Program was amended and passed on August 23, 1989; education has changed in Puerto Rico and both the PRDE and Teacher Preparation Program requirements have become more demanding in these areas. There is a need to adjust to new trends and social obligations for education in Puerto Rico. This legislation is proposed precisely to ensure that all who participate in this experience or internship find a suitable framework for their work and are fully prepared for that work on completing their university studies.

DECREE BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PUERTO RICO:

### **Article 1. – Title**

This title of this law will be "Law to regulate the Educational Clinical Experiences Program of the Puerto Rico Department of Education".

### **Article 2. -Definitions**

The following terms shall have the meanings indicated below where they are referenced in this law:

(1) Professional Counselor Candidate - Master's degree or doctorate college student, next to completing the degree in this category, who carries out the educational clinical experience (internship) complying

with the requirements established by the Educational Clinical Experiences Program of Puerto Rico Department of Education and the university institution.

(2) School Director Candidate - A master's degree or doctorate college student, next to completing the degree in this category, who carries out educational clinical experience meeting the requirements established by the Educational Clinical Experiences Program of Puerto Rico Department of Education and the university institution.

(3) Teacher Candidate - Undergraduate or graduate level university student, next to completing the degree in this category, who carries out the educational clinical experience meeting the requirements established by the Educational Clinical Experiences Program of Puerto Rico Department of Education and the university institution.

(4) Educational Practice Experience Centers - schools or public or private educational centers licensed to operate, provided by the Government, where students preparing to become teachers, school directors or professional counselors on the school stage, and also performed field experiences and clinical in preschool, elementary or secondary levels.

(5) Cooperative Professional Counselor at the school setting - has a responsibility, along with the Clinical Experience University Supervisor, to evaluate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of a Professional Counselor Candidate in a school setting and identify strengths and areas of need to improve their professional growth. It holds a license by Board of Professional Counselors license and valid certificates of Cooperator Adviser and Counselor has a minimum of two (2) years effective experience as a Professional Counselor at the school site is kept up-to-date in their professional practice.

(6) Educational Clinical Experience Coordinator - University teacher assigned to be liaison between the Higher Education Institution that represents and the Puerto Rico Department of Education, whose functions shall be determined by the Faculty, Department, or Division of Education of the institution .

(7) Preparatory Cooperative Course for Teachers, School Directors or Professional Counselor at the school site - course that prepares staff for monitoring and evaluating candidates clinical experiences according to their category, in addition to providing opportunities to continue to strengthen their professional skills.

(8) Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) - Governmental agency responsible for the public school system, establish public policy on clinical educational experiences and provide regular certifications to teachers, school directors and professional advisors in the school setting, among others.

(9) Educational Practice Experience Center Director - person in charge of the public or private school licensed to operate at the preschool, elementary or secondary levels.

(10) Cooperative School Director - is responsible, along with the University Clinical Experience Supervisor, of assessing the knowledge, skills and dispositions of the School Director Candidate in the processes of educational leadership and management and identifies strengths and areas where they need to support for their professional growth. It has the valid certificate of School Director and Cooperating School Director, and a minimum of two (2) years of effective experience as a School Director are required and is kept up-to-date in their professional practice.

(11) Educational clinical experiences - formal practice at a school setting at the end of the university preparation where a Teacher Candidate, School Director Candidate or Professional Counselor Candidate at the school site assumes the responsibilities inherent to their future profession in all of its dimensions and shows the knowledge, skills, and dispositions acquired through the learning process.

(12) Educational field experiences - practices in formal school settings before the clinical experience which are part of the courses during the preparation of the college student.

(13) Private Higher Education Institution - private post-secondary education center licensed to operate in Puerto Rico composed of one or more institutional units which grant associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other academic awards of higher education.

(14) Public Higher Education Institution - public post-secondary education center licensed to operate in Puerto Rico, composed of one or more institutional units, which award associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other academic titles in higher education.

(15) Baccalaureate - minimum level of education required to serve as teacher for an elementary, secondary, or higher level and which is issued by any institution of higher education licensed to operate in Puerto Rico.

(16) Highly Qualified Teacher- teacher who has an academic preparation (baccalaureate minimum) from an institution of higher education licensed to operate in Puerto Rico; has approved teacher certification tests or equivalent, has a Regular certificate of Teacher in the level and the content area being taught and demonstrates effectiveness in their educational practice.

(17) Cooperating Teacher - is responsible, along with the Clinical Experience Supervisor, for evaluating the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the teacher candidate in the teaching and learning processes, and to identify strengths and areas of improvement for their professional growth. Teacher who possess the Regular Teacher Certification as well as the Cooperating Teacher Certification are highly qualified;

have a minimum of three (3) years of experience as an effective teacher and are kept up-to-date in their professional practice.

(18) Professional Counselors Preparation Program - University program at the graduate level which prepare students with the professional skills required to obtain the Regular Professional Counselor Certification in the school setting that will allow them to effectively perform, at the levels of elementary, secondary or post-secondary non-university educational systems public and private Puerto Rico.

(19) School Directors Preparation Program - University program graduate prepared to the (1a) student with the skills required for the Regular certification of school director that allows you to run effectively in preschool, elementary, secondary or post-secondary non-university levels in the educational public and private systems of Puerto Rico.

(20) Teachers Preparation Program (PPM) - University program at the undergraduate level which prepares students with the skills required for the Regular certification of teacher and carry out the processes of teaching and learning effectively in preschool, elementary or secondary levels in public and private Puerto Rico education systems.

(21) Educational Clinical Experience Supervisor - University faculty responsible, along with the cooperative teacher for evaluating through clinical experience, the performance of the teacher candidate, Director candidate and/or School Professional Counselor candidate, at the school setting.

### **Article 3. – Establishment of Educational Practice Experience Centers**

Establishment of the public or private Educational Practice Experience Centers or licensed to operate provided by the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the teacher candidates, School Director candidates or Professional Counselor candidates at the school setting, perform clinical and field experiences in preschool, elementary or secondary levels. It empowers the authorities of public and private institutions of higher education in collaboration with the Puerto Rico Department of Education select Educational Practice Experience Centers outside their campuses. These centers will be established in public schools, private schools or pre-school, elementary or secondary levels with license to operate in Puerto Rico. The Centers will be subjected to supervision by the Puerto Rico Department of Education.

### **Article 4. -Allocation of funds**

The allocation of two hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (275,000) , set forth in the joint resolution of the General Operation Budget of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico 2015-2016, continues in force with annual recurrence, to cover the costs of the payment of stipends to different populations, visits and monitor of Educational Practice Experience Centers, purchase of materials and equipment , training to

university professors working with the institutions of higher education and other administrative expenses or meetings with staff related to the Educational Clinical Experience Program.

#### **Article 5.- Stipends to participants**

A semestral stipend payment is authorized for those who are in charge of the Educational Practice Experience Centers, which are: School Directors, Cooperating School Directors, Cooperating Teachers, and Cooperating Professional Counselors who are officials in the public schools of the Puerto Rico Department of Education when the candidate (a) they supervise come from a public higher institution of education. This allowance is awarded for the additional responsibilities assigned **in collaboration with the University**. Each private institution of higher education shall decide and be responsible for any stipend as they deem fit.

#### **Article 6. – Regulations of the Puerto Rico Department of Education**

Along with the institutions of higher education, who have a faculty, Department, or Division of Education, **will develop the regulations that will govern the organization and operation of the Educational Clinical Experiences Program** no later than ninety (90) days from the date of adoption of this law.

#### **Article 7. -Procedure for care of affairs not expected**

Any problem or issue related to orientation and operation of the Educational Clinical Experiences Program not foreseen in this law, **shall be resolved upon mutual agreement** between the Secretary of the Puerto Rico Department of Education a designated official, and by the President or the relevant authorities of the Institutions of Higher Education.

#### **Article 8. -Derogation.**

Derogation of the law No. 79 of August 23, 1989, as amended, known as the "Law to regulate the Educational Clinical Teaching Program of the Department of Public Instruction of Puerto Rico".

#### **Article 9. -Entry into force.**

This law will begin to rule on July 1, 2016.