



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
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This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is made and entered into this 1st day of July 2025 between the **Grissom School of Education of University of Tennessee Southern (UTS)** and **Rutherford County Schools**.

A. Purpose

This MOU is to establish a clinical placement agreement between the Grissom School of Education, University of Tennessee Southern, and **Rutherford County Schools**. This MOU establishes the roles, services, and structure of this clinical placement agreement.

B. Roles

University of Tennessee Southern. Grissom School of Education

The School of Education provides coursework, field and clinical experiences for candidates seeking Tennessee Department of Education Teacher certification and licensure in Elementary Education (K-5), Secondary Education (6-12), and Physical Education (K-12) and Special Education Interventionist K-8.

The School of Education teacher programs are fully accredited at the state-level by the Tennessee Department of Education (TN DOE).

Rutherford County Schools

Rutherford County Schools are pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade coeducational public day school in **Rutherford County, TN**. The schools promote academic excellence and inspire students to be intellectually curious, to use their talents to the fullest, to be people of integrity and to be contributors to society. In addition, **Rutherford County Schools** are recognized by the TN DOE as an approved clinical site for candidates seeking TN DOE certification and licensure.

C. Services provided by the MOU

University of Tennessee Southern's Traditional Clinical Practice and Field Experience

The clinical practice or field experience student has been admitted to University of Tennessee Southern Education Division. Per the UT Southern clinical practice program requirements, dual placements are required. The second placement will be at a different grade level and different school. UT Southern shall provide a college supervisor to assist the candidate's professional growth. The college supervisor will

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work in collaboration with **Rutherford County Schools** (mentors, and shall provide five observations each semester (Fall, Spring) for clinical practice. The University of Tennessee Southern's clinical practice candidate placements shall run for 15 weeks (8 one placement and 7 the second). Field experiences may run five hours to 30 hours each placement depending on course requirements. Candidates in each experience will have passed an TBI background check and have liability insurance. In addition, Clinical practice candidates will have passed all Praxis II exams required by the state of Tennessee. In accordance with Tennessee State Board Policy and UTS Clinical Practice Handbook, Teacher Candidates will complete edTPA in the first placement of the clinical experience.

Candidates accepted into the UT Southern *Grow Your Own Apprenticeship* program, TATL, and the Job-embedded pathway may also be recognized as paid school system employees.

Funding involved D.

University of Tennessee Southern's Traditional Field Experience

A stipend of \$5.00 an hour will be paid to the cooperating teacher.

University of Tennessee Southern's Traditional Clinical Practice Program

Each traditional clinical practice cooperating teacher (mentor) shall be paid \$300 for their services as a clinical practice mentor.

- University of Tennessee Southern has no financial obligation to Rutherford County Schools under this MOU

E. Implementation and Structure

University of Tennessee Southern's Field Experience

Responsibilities of the candidate

- Keep appointments or give advance notice to both the principal and cooperating teacher.
- Introduce themselves to the principal and cooperating teacher before the first FE.
- Communicate to Dr. Daniel McMasters for a different cooperating teacher than assigned, so the details can be confirmed with the LEA.
- Be flexible to assigned different situations.
- Prepare and submit *Field Experience Reflection Journal*, follow the class instructor's guidelines.
- Submit an evaluation at the conclusion of each FE block of 5-10 hours to the UTS supervisor.



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Responsibilities of the classroom mentor teacher

- **Minimize candidates' *sit and listen*** time by allowing them to serve the classroom in the role of **teaching assistants** working closely with you (mentor) to enhance content presentation or drill and practice scaffolding with individuals, small groups, or whole classes as needed.
- Discuss and establish classroom participation and activities with the candidate.
- Do not leave the candidate alone to supervise students.
- Mail (in the envelope supplied) all required forms at the conclusion of the FE hours (W9, Data Form, Evaluation)
- Allow the candidate to produce a video of a teaching presentation for edTPA and other assignments as required. In the case of field experience, allow the candidate to video a mini lesson for evaluation by education faculty and for reflection by candidate.
- Develop a schedule of class times convenient to both the candidate and the cooperating teacher.
- Allow UTS candidates contact information (phone and/or email).

Responsibilities of the UTS supervisor

- Have at least one visit (virtual or in-person) to each placement to observe the candidate serving in the role of teaching assistant. Candidate may video a mini lesson to submit to instructor with reflection. A written evaluation of that visit will be completed to gather data for future program assessments within 5 school days.

Rutherford County Schools Clinical Practice Placement

Responsibilities of the candidate

- Work each day is determined by the LEA teacher workday.
- Note the school day extends beyond the dismissal of students and is a mutually agreed upon time between the college supervisor and **Rutherford County Schools'** mentor(s).
- Use the requirements of the *Clinical Practice Handbook* as the frame of expectations for successful completion of the clinical practice.
- Attend all professional development days as required by **Rutherford County Schools**.
- Assume responsibility for managing classroom set-up and supplies at the mentor teacher's request.



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- Plan and carry out lessons under the mentor teacher's supervision.
- Take part in parent conferences, as allowed.
- Assist with completing quarterly Progress Reports.
- Meet professional evaluation requirements.
- Abide by all policies and procedures of **Rutherford County Schools**.

Responsibilities of the classroom mentor teacher

- Provide supervision of the candidate's performance.
- Mentor the candidate in the areas of pedagogy, communication, assessment, and professional development.
- Provide feedback to the UT Southern Supervisor for assessment of performance for licensure requirements.

Responsibilities of the UTS supervisor

- Provide feedback regarding the candidate's pedagogical and professional development using the instruments of TEAM (Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model).
- Solicit feedback from the **Rutherford County Schools' mentor** on the candidate's skill development in the areas of pedagogy, communication, assessment, and professional development.
- Act as a liaison between the candidate and the classroom mentor.

F. Data Sharing

Rutherford County Schools and UTS shall provide one another with data concerning teacher candidates, teachers, students, and educator vacancies in addition to any other relevant and available data source. Available data shall be provided in the manner and form as specified by the designated representatives or designee of **Rutherford County Schools** and UTS. These data may include

1. Data necessary to fulfill partnership agreement requirements and duties,
2. Teacher effect data from tests administered in accordance with ESSA and TCA 49-1-602,
3. Educator evaluation data, to be used for the purposes on improving preparation programs,
4. Student data for RUTHERFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS graduates who have matriculated into UTS to be used for the purposes of recruiting and co-selecting participants in the RUTHERFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS/UTS collaborative educator preparation pipeline programs (Grow Your Own), inclusive of program of study, academic performance, and/or status within the university.

The shared data shall be used only for the purposes of providing an evidence-base to inform the creating, designing, evaluating, and improving of collaborative educator



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preparation programs; with UTS assisting in the services or functions for which Rutherford County Schools would otherwise use their employees.

UTS will share data related work products via mutually agreed upon secure electronic submission. This data may include personally identifiable information included but not limited to names, gender, and ethnicity as well as status in the teacher education program. Any data received pursuant to this agreement shall be destroyed when it is no longer needed for collaborative improvement processes.

Confidentiality: UTS and Rutherford County Schools will maintain the confidentiality of any and all data, to the extent allowed by law, exchanged as a part of this agreement. The confidentiality requirements under this paragraph shall survive the expiration or termination of this agreement or any subsequent agreement intended to supersede this agreement. Rutherford County Schools and UTS agree to the following system of safeguards:

- I. Ensuring that all shared data records are kept in secured facilities and access to such records is limited only to personnel who are authorized to have access to said data under this section of the agreement.
2. Secure passwords will be needed to access computer and cloud-based databases used to process, store, transmit, or analyses data provided under this agreement.
3. Good practices or assigning and/or securing passwords will be maintained to ensure the integrity of the systems used to secure computer and cloud-based databases used to process, store, transmit, or analyze data provided under this agreement.
4. Systems that ensure that all confidential data processed, stored, transmitted, and analyzed under the provisions of this agreement shall be maintained in a secure manner that prevents the interception, diversion, or other unauthorized access to said data,
5. Ensuring that any and all disclosures of confidential data comply with FERPA and Tennessee law relating to the privacy rights of students and educators, such as TCA Title 49-Education.

F. Term and Termination

This MOU will become effective at the time of signing and continue until July 31, 2026. Upon expiration of the term this MOU will be renewed for one-year terms unless either party gives notice of intent to terminate at least by March I. The University will hold meetings (at least Ix per semester) to discuss progress and/or needs of the LEA and the University. The MOU will be reviewed yearly for adherence to

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Tennessee State Board of Education Policy.

This MOU may be terminated by either party at any time upon not less than 30 days prior written notice to the other party. This MOU may be terminated immediately if either party fails to meet their obligations contained within this MOU.

University of Tennessee Southern, Grissom School of Education

DocuSigned by:
University of Tennessee Southern, Grissom School of Education

By: Daniel McMasters (School Chair)

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Date: 7/27/2025 | 20:37:42 PDT

University of Tennessee Southern, Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration

DocuSigned by:

By: Eric Blumenthal

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Date: 7/27/2025 | 21:44:38 EDT

Rutherford County Director of Schools

DocuSigned by:

By: James Sullivan

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Date: 7/29/2025 | 08:32:16 PDT



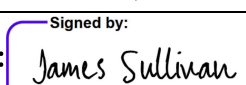
Educator Preparation Provider/Local Education Agency State Recognized Partnership Agreement

Educator Preparation Provider (EPP)	University of Tennessee Southern, Grissom School of Education
Local Education Agency (LEA)	Rutherford County
Academic Year of Agreement	2025-26

EPP Contact/Designee	
Name: Janet Hanvy	Title: Director of Teacher Education
Email: jhanvy@utsouthern.edu	Phone Number: 931-363-9852.

LEA Contact/Designee	
Name: Dr. James Sullivan	Title: Director
Email: sullavanja@rcschools.net	Phone Number: (615) 893-5812

Certification (signatures verify partnership)	
EPP Head Administrator: Daniel McMasters	Title: Chair, Grissom School of Education
Signature:  DocuSigned by: 26BA7A94B8F0410...	Date: 7/27/2025 20:37:42 PDT

LEA Head Administrator: Dr. James Sullivan	Title: Director
Signature:  Signed by: CBB6CF071D04B49E...	Date: 7/29/2025 08:32:16 PDT



**Prompt
1**

Describe the strategies and actions in place to co-select clinical educators and collaborate to prepare, evaluate, and support high-quality clinical educators, both provider and school-based, who demonstrate a positive impact on candidates' development and pre-k-12 students. *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

1. Clinical supervisors and clinical mentors are agreed upon by both University of Tennessee Southern and the LEA. The University will continue to seek to recruit staff who have the skills to provide feedback to the clinical practice students as well as to the clinical mentors. The clinical supervisors shall have appropriate training in TEAM (or other state approved evaluation system). If a problem should arise with a supervisor, the appropriate district staff will bring concerns to the UTS school chair to rectify. Because the LEA is more familiar with the teachers and schools, the district recommends placements for the Teacher Candidates. The LEA chooses the clinical mentors with an effectiveness score of 4 or 5 in the previous year; they are licensed to teach in the area they are supervising and have at least 3 years of experience as a teacher. As with the clinical supervisors, should an issue develop, the LEA and the University have an open dialogue that allows for discussions to seek resolution.
2. Orientation for new and experienced mentors for both Field Experience and Clinical Practice will be conducted by the University. Mentor training will be developed to address coaching and observation of teacher candidates as well as providing actionable feedback.
3. University of Tennessee Southern will work with mentors to determine individual needs throughout the semester and provide coaching. LEA will inform the University when a change is made in the evaluation instrument used by the district. This will allow the Education faculty an opportunity to learn and incorporate these into classes as appropriate.
4. Discussions will be held with mentors throughout the clinical experience to discuss further needs and concerns. The supervisor and the mentor will discuss the needs and successes of the candidate and how the supervisor can provide additional support. The minimum of five visits (in-person and/or virtual) is conducted during the clinical placements. Others may be scheduled upon request by the mentor, administrator, teacher and/or candidate. UTS will work with the LEA to develop a plan for providing clinical mentors' Professional Development in the areas of coaching and evaluation in order to observe, evaluate and give feedback. Data from surveys will be used to determine other PD topics needed to support mentors. An important component of the plan will be to increase the number of clinical mentors in the district as well as retaining current mentors.
5. Exit interviews/surveys with student, clinical mentor, and University clinical supervisor. Building administrators may also provide feedback as well. Data from the interviews/surveys will be shared with University Education faculty and LEAs. Data will be used to inform improvements in the program.
6. Clinical Mentors will be evaluated through the surveys completed by Teacher Candidates, discussions with Teacher Candidates and Mentors by Clinical Supervisors, TEAM observation data, and other anecdotal data that may present itself. Should a Clinical Mentor not meet the expectations of the EPP, a discussion will be held with the LEA to decide about future placements and/or additional coaching.



**Prompt
2**

Describe the design and implementation of clinical experiences, utilizing various modalities, of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on pre-k-12 students (For instructional leader programs, ensure how clinical experiences allow opportunities for candidates to practice applications of content knowledge and skills.). *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

1. Field experiences are required for all teacher education candidates. The field experience hours will vary depending on the licensure being sought-- 50-110 hours (P.E., secondary, special education, and elementary). The LEA and UTS ensure that the teacher education programs meet minimum expectations for clinical practice as outlined in the educator preparation policy of the Tennessee State Board of Education (5.504). (Clinical Practice Assignments, Clinical Practice Handbook)

2. Clinical experiences are required for all teacher education candidates. Candidates must complete 15 weeks (8 in first placement and 7 in the second), one in the lower grade band and one in the upper grade band.

3. A concerted effort will be made to place candidates in diverse schools/classrooms. Schools with diverse populations based on ethnicity and poverty will be sought. . The South Central region is a rural area but includes students who live on farms and in small rural communities. There are also parts of the region that are more suburban. Teacher candidates complete a diversity questionnaire after each placement for the University to review diversity placements and adjust as needed. UTS uses the diversity categories required and reported on in the state reports and CAEP.

4. Candidates, at the beginning of their coursework, do more observing and learning from the mentor teacher. For each field experience placement, the candidates observe the first 1-3 hours and reflect on what they see, discussing in class what they saw and how it compares to the methods/techniques discussed previously in class, putting theory into practice. The first few field experiences will culminate in the candidate doing individual or small-group instruction, supervised by the mentor teacher. Observations by university personnel are done to ensure they are using evidence-based practices. As candidates become more proficient, the candidates teach lessons that they plan themselves, using data from assessments, and showing differentiated instruction. They also begin co-assessing assessments with the cooperating teacher. During these experiences they analyze materials, resources, and curriculum, often bringing materials back to the university classroom, to participate in a discussion about what practices work best with the specific student needs in the classroom. Included in the discussion and reflections are the strategies that the candidate observed the clinical mentors use to assist students in learning the vocabulary, and content specific writing (e.g., journal results of experiments, historical writing, narrative/persuasive writing, mathematical writing, etc.), and then communicating their reasoning in class through discussion.

By the time candidates begin clinical experience, they have become much more proficient in designing lessons and teaching, selecting appropriate instructional materials, and implementing solid instructional practices. They begin the clinical practice by observing the first week and getting to know the students and classroom procedures. They also participate in departmental meetings, grade-level meetings, IEP (Individualized Education Programs) meetings, etc. Lesson plans are developed incorporating student interests and cultural heritage and are relevant to students' prior knowledge. Use of TEAM is essential in this strategy. Lesson plans are reviewed by the Clinical Educator prior to instruction.