

## **Standard 8: District-Employed Supervisors**

### **Standard 8.1**

*District-employed Supervisors* are *certified* and experienced in either teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential.

STEP refers to its district-based clinical supervisors as cooperating teachers (CTs). Our university-based support team are called supervisors. In **prompts 8.2** and **8.3** we discuss in detail the qualifications and roles of our Cooperating Teachers.

All program cooperating teachers must have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in their area of certification, appropriate California credentials (including English Learner Authorization), and a strong commitment and willingness to mentor teacher candidates over the period of a semester or full academic year. **Tables 4.3** and **4.3a** detail the qualifications of STEP's cooperating teachers. As the tables demonstrate, all cooperating teachers in the program meet the stated expectations above.

The program prioritizes the pairing of candidates with district-based cooperating teachers whose practices reflect STEP's vision of teaching and learning as described in its mission statement. All of STEP's fieldwork sites ([2013-14](#), [2014-15](#), [2015-16](#)) are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and teach curriculum materials that are aligned with the state-adopted CCSS and other standards.

### **Standard 8.2**

**A process for selecting *Supervisors* who are knowledgeable and supportive of the academic content standards for students is based on identified criteria.**

STEP selects cooperating teachers based on direct, first-hand knowledge of their classrooms and teaching practices, rather than by self-nomination or solely on principals' recommendations. To select excellent cooperating teachers, STEP draws upon its strong relationships with placement sites. STEP seeks cooperating teachers who possess the expertise and experience necessary to be effective mentors and who understand STEP's approach for helping new teachers gradually assume responsibility for their fieldwork classrooms ([graduated responsibility](#)).

As discussed above, all potential cooperating teachers must have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in their area of certification, California credentials (including English Learner Authorization), and a strong commitment and willingness to mentor teacher candidates over the period of a semester or full academic year.

Once STEP has identified a potential cooperating teacher, the Director of Clinical Work, STEP faculty, clinical associates, and STEP supervisors visit the teacher's classrooms to

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gather evidence that their classroom practices are consistent with STEP's vision of effective teaching. STEP visitors use a protocol that allows observers to capture what occurs in the classroom and describe how learning happens in the classroom (see [School Site Observation Protocol](#)). The protocol asks observers to record examples of student work (if visible), the climate of the classroom, how the goals of the lessons are communicated and assessed, how the teacher finds out what the students know prior to the lesson, and how the needs of different learners are addressed. After collecting the data, STEP confers with school administrators and department chairs before making final selections of cooperating teachers.

This selection process increases the likelihood that candidates are paired with cooperating teachers whose teaching practices reflect and reinforce what candidates are learning in their STEP courses. STEP frequently places candidates with cooperating teachers who are also graduates of the program, which also strengthens the candidates' ability to build useful connections between what they learn in their coursework to their clinical experiences in schools and classrooms.

The placement process in STEP is iterative; matching STEP students with cooperating teachers involves gathering information from candidates, cooperating teachers, and school administrators to determine how placements can be as productive and supportive as possible. STEP first considers information from the preliminary Placement Questionnaire ([Secondary/ Elementary \(all\)](#)), where candidates share preferences regarding subject matter emphases and school characteristics. This information is then compared with STEP's pool of Cooperating Teachers, who have been previously selected based on the criteria described above. The director of clinical work then meets with [Secondary](#) and [Elementary \(all\)](#) candidates to describe the field placement possibilities and to solidify information about the candidates' interests. Other factors are also taken into consideration, such as cooperating teachers' schedules and the courses they teach, to ensure that each candidate and their cooperating teacher will have ample time for planning and debriefing. Once matches have been established, candidates and cooperating teachers meet by phone and in person to get acquainted and prepare to begin the school year. All candidates are placed before the school year begins, and candidates are in the classroom with the cooperating teacher on the first day of school.

### **Standard 8.3**

*Supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.*

#### **TRAINING & ORIENTATION**

STEP complements the strengths of our cooperating teachers (our district-based clinical supervisors) and increases their capacity to be excellent mentors through a variety of resources. Prior to the start of the school year, STEP [requires](#) new cooperating teachers to attend an [orientation and training workshop](#). The workshop is facilitated by the program's director of clinical work, the STEP clinical associates, and veteran cooperating teachers

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who participate in panels and other forms of mentor training activities. In the rare cases when cooperating teachers are unable to attend this or any other professional development event, relevant information (including documents and other materials) are shared via an experienced cooperating teacher at the same school site or the relevant university supervisor. In addition, the STEP director of clinical work and/or a clinical associate in the related content area will [follow up](#) with the absentee to inform them of the content covered and ensure they are well prepared for their role as a mentor.

Soon after the orientation workshop, university supervisors meet individually with all cooperating teachers, both new and returning, for several purposes: to review the [Teacher Candidate Contract](#) and Integration Plan ([Single Subject/ Multiple Subject \(all\)](#)), the *Cooperating Teacher Handbook* ([Secondary/ Elementary \(all\)](#)), and the program schedule; to provide support for enhancing mentoring capabilities, to support the relationship between the CT and teacher candidate, and to answer individual questions. From this point forward, cooperating teachers work extensively with Supervisors to maintain consistent communication between STEP and the placement sites and to offer feedback and insights in their mentoring role. The [collaborative relationship](#) among the cooperating teacher, candidate, and University Supervisor anchors candidates' field placement experience by providing constant communication pathways between the field and the university.

Throughout the school year STEP provides additional professional development sessions for cooperating teachers including lunch time meetings at their school sites and [Dine and Discuss](#) events at the Stanford campus. These events provide spaces in which our Cooperating Teachers receive ongoing training and support from colleagues. Cooperating teachers are not required to attend these sessions, but most do. As mentioned above, for cooperating teachers unable to attend specific events, the program uses a range of approaches to ensure all CTs are updated, informed, and well supported in their roles. Clinical associates and other university-based supervisors play a key role in these efforts.

STEP also encourages cooperating teachers to further their professional development by pursuing [National Board Certification](#). Stanford University also offers [support groups](#) for National Board candidates so that they have the opportunity to share videotapes of teaching, analyze practice in light of the NBPTS standards, and support the development of one another's practice.

### **EVALUATION & RECOGNITION**

Throughout the year STEP monitors the quality of the clinical placements and makes necessary changes if the mutual needs of the cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate are not being met. Via [weekly check-ins](#) throughout each quarter, the STEP directors solicit written feedback about the placements from candidates and meet with candidates individually to check their progress. When concerns arise about the quality of placements or other relevant placement issues arise, the STEP director of clinical work collaborates with the supervisors to provide feedback, guidance and support to CTs in a timely and efficient manner, and follows up regularly to ensure a productive and smooth experience for the teacher candidates and the CTs. STEP's director of clinical work and/or clinical associates directly address any areas of growth for a cooperating teacher that emerge from

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these evaluations. For example, a STEP supervisor might meet individually with a CT to discuss strategies for effective feedback to candidates, model alternative pedagogical practices for the cooperating teacher, offer to observe and provide feedback on the teacher's instruction, or facilitate meetings between the teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher to smooth out any communication concerns.

At the end of the year candidates have an additional opportunity to evaluate their fieldwork experience on the [STEP Exit Survey](#). This feedback on the practices and mentoring of cooperating teachers is reviewed by the directors and used to make decisions regarding future field placements.