

## **Stanford Teacher Education Program Guiding Principles for Selecting Placements**

The purpose of student teaching occurring concurrently with university coursework is to allow teacher candidates the opportunity to construct bridges between theory and practice.

Teacher candidates spend time in schools and classrooms observing and practicing different approaches to teaching and learning. They experience the rhythms of a day, week, semester, and ultimately the year as they develop relationships with students, school faculty, parents/families, and others involved in the work of the school. Carefully chosen settings with expert cooperating teachers support the candidates' growth and development as novice teachers. When cooperating teachers open up their classroom to a teacher candidate by being a mentor and coach is an important contribution to the profession and to the preparation of new teachers.

**Principle #1: Teacher candidates need opportunities to learn and engage in equitable practices.**

**Principle #2: Teacher candidates need opportunities to observe high quality teaching.**

**Principle #3: Teacher candidates need opportunities to engage with high quality mentors.**

**Principle #4: Teacher candidates are best supported when their placements and their university-based program (STEP) are a mutually valued partnership.**

### **Finding/selecting placements based on the principles**

While the selection of a placement is a thoughtful, multi-layered process, we do not have a list of "requirements" that each site must meet. Rather, we employ the four guiding principles described above to assist us with the important task of selecting placements. These principles are based on:

- research on teacher development and mentoring
- our program design, including content-based Curriculum & Instruction courses.

In order to find placements for our teacher candidates that reflect a balance of these guiding principles, we spend time getting to know the work of teachers in the diverse communities neighboring Stanford's campus. Our original contact with a potential placement site is the result of various interactions/exchanges, including, but not limited to:

- a school principal contacts STEP and expresses interest in having a few of his/her teachers serve as cooperating teachers;
- a current cooperating teacher recommends a friend/colleague to STEP as a possible cooperating teacher;
- a STEP colleague recommends a teacher/school as a possible placement site.

Following the original recommendation or referral, STEP's director of clinical work and other STEP faculty/staff visit the school site. The purpose of this visit is primarily to obtain an overall sense of the school and classroom culture. During this visit, we employ connoisseurship and collect information (in this case, by observing teachers at work with students as well as with their peers, by observing the classroom environment, by looking at student work, by talking with teachers, students, and school administrators). We consider that information in light of the guiding principles stated above. In some cases, a second visit will be made to gather additional information. When we find a teacher whose practices reflect our guiding principles, we consider that placement for our current and/or future teacher candidates.