

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR INTERN IS HAVING DIFFICULTY

We screen all interns before they come to your school. Despite our high standards, occasionally a problem may arise. Below are some suggestions that might be helpful if your intern is having difficulty or if you become concerned about his/her progress. Our expectation is that interns are told to look and act professional at all times.

Warning Signs

- ❖ failure to show growth/improvement
- ❖ planning that is consistently late or poor in quality
- ❖ excessive problems with discipline and classroom management or problems that worsen over time
- ❖ failure to make changes based on suggestions
- ❖ communication problems: difficulty finding time to talk with student or student having difficulty understanding suggestions
- ❖ personal problems that interfere with teaching
- ❖ repeated excuses, avoidance behavior
- ❖ negative behaviors/attitude
- ❖ placing the blame/responsibility elsewhere; doesn't accept responsibility
- ❖ excessive absence/lateness
- ❖ excessive complaints from students, faculty or parents

Planning

- ❖ Make certain the intern is adequately planned (daily lessons and unit); insist that lesson plans be revised based on your feedback; do not let intern teach if not properly planned. Even though interns have instruction in lesson planning, you may need to "coach" them in the specific plan used in your school or school system.

Classroom Observations

- ❖ Please be present with the University Supervisor during lesson observations. Discuss student strengths, weaknesses, areas of concern and specific changes that need to be made after the lesson.
- ❖ Have the intern observe teachers in various disciplines for identification of varying teaching styles and management techniques.
- ❖ Have the intern observe other faculty specifically looking for teacher behaviors that address problems he/she is having. If possible, you may want to accompany the intern to point out and discuss good teaching behaviors.
- ❖ Have your department chairperson or principal observe to provide confirmation regarding what is happening.

University Supervisor

- ❖ Exchange home telephone numbers, so each is accessible to discuss progress of the student teacher.
- ❖ Involve the University Supervisor early on. The sooner problems are identified the sooner you can obtain help in remediating them or in terminating an unsuccessful teaching experience.
- ❖ Have the University Supervisor visit more frequently (i.e., accelerate planned scheduled observations).
- ❖ Develop an Assistance Plan with the University Supervisor to help the intern focus on needs.
- ❖ Discuss the possibility of having another faculty member from the university visit with the University Supervisor to provide another point of view.
- ❖ Discuss the stark reality of a “no growth” situation and possible options, such as counseling the student out of teaching, giving an incomplete with the possibility of returning at a later date or terminating an unsuccessful experience.

Conferring

- ❖ Give written feedback on teaching, focusing pointedly on areas that need growth; ask the intern to retain these comments in a notebook; they can be useful later in establishing patterns and as documentation of repeated problems. They have been told to reflect and implement any suggestions.
- ❖ Give them help with specifics (e.g., ways to motivate, discipline and management techniques) but work toward them being able to generate ideas on their own.
- ❖ Be specific about behaviors that need to be changed and when you expect these changes (suggestions) to be implemented.
- ❖ Make certain you are present with the University Supervisor during conferences, so all persons hear the same thing.
- ❖ Set a time for the next formal observations with the University Supervisor and summarize changes that need to be made with plans for their implementation.