



How NCTQ scores the Student Teaching Standard

[Standard and indicators](#)

Data used to score this standard

Evaluation of elementary, secondary, and special education teacher preparation programs on Standard 14: Student Teaching uses the following sources of data:

- Handbooks prepared by institutions of higher education (IHEs) pertaining to the teacher preparation program and/or student teaching placements specifically¹
- Observation instruments used by university supervisors in student teaching placements²
- Contracts and/or communications between IHEs and school districts regarding student teaching placements
- Nomination or application forms completed by school district personnel that pertain to prospective cooperating teachers³
- Syllabi for seminars and courses related to student teaching
- Documents and policies authored by school districts relevant to the placement of student teachers

Who analyzes the data

Two general analysts independently evaluate each program using a detailed scoring protocol from which this scoring methodology is abstracted. For information on the process by which scoring discrepancies are resolved, see the “scoring processes” section of the [General Methodology](#).

Scope of analysis

This standard examines to what extent programs ensure that student teachers receive adequate feedback and are placed with cooperating teachers who are strong mentors and can model effective teaching. Specifically, the standard measures the frequency and spacing of observations by program supervisors, the programs’ role in the selection of cooperating teachers, and the criteria that programs establish for cooperating teachers.

¹ For a full definition of “student teaching placement” refer to the [glossary](#).

² The “university supervisor” is the IHE-employed individual charged with periodically visiting the student teacher, observing the student teacher’s instruction, and evaluating the student teacher in collaboration with the cooperating teacher. All but a few IHEs employ such individuals, and some IHEs have their own full-time faculty serve in this capacity.

³ The “cooperating teacher” is the teacher in whose classroom the teacher candidate is placed for student teaching.

Thorough [document processing](#) first ensures that all relevant sources of data are identified and that we understand which documents are used by each program we are evaluating. Although student teaching placement processes and policies are often uniform across an institution, programs at the same IHE are evaluated separately if they have different practices or policies.

Indicator 14.1

For all IHEs, analysis begins with a determination of the number of observations that the university supervisor is required to conduct during a teacher candidate’s full-time student teaching placement (Indicator 14.1). This information is generally found in student teaching handbooks and/or syllabi.⁴ Only observations with written feedback are counted.⁵ Visits by supervisors at the beginning of the placement to “get to know” student teachers and/or cooperating teachers, but which include no observation of the student teacher’s instruction, are not counted. In addition, only the minimum number of required observations with written feedback is considered for evaluation of this standard, not the additional observations sometimes suggested for student teachers who are struggling.

Sometimes contradictory information is found in documents used by the same program. For example, a student teaching handbook might indicate that the teacher candidate could expect the university supervisor to conduct five observations, but the corresponding university supervisor’s handbook might indicate that four to six observations are required. In such a situation, we report the lowest number of mandatory observations supported by documentation—four in the example given. If neither handbooks nor syllabi state a required number of observations, we conclude that the program has not established a minimum and award no credit for the portion of the indicator that measures numbers of observations.

We also note whether institutions specifically direct supervisors to space their observations throughout the placement rather than leave the distribution of observations to their discretion. Unless it simply conveys a recommendation, virtually any language addressing the spacing of observations suffices to satisfy this aspect of the indicator. If student teaching encompasses two placements and observations with written feedback are required during each, the requirement for spacing is satisfied. The requirement is also satisfied if the university supervisor must fill out midterm and final summative evaluations that incorporate information from observations conducted during the two halves of the placement.

⁴ Numbered checkboxes are commonly found on observation forms, but because there are sometimes more checkboxes than the minimum number of observations specified in other documents, analysts do not rely on the number of checkboxes to determine the number of required observations.

⁵ Videotaped observations may count if the feedback on the videotape is equivalent to feedback for an on-site observation.

Indicator 14.2

Indicator 14.2 evaluates whether the program communicates clearly to school district administrators that cooperating teachers must:⁶

- 1) possess demonstrated mentorship skill, (which may be stated generally or specifically as skills in at least two of the following areas: observing, providing feedback, holding professional conversations, and working collaboratively) OR take a substantial mentorship course prior to or while serving as a cooperating teacher;⁷ and
- 2) possess effective instructional skills, as demonstrated by the teacher’s positive impact on student learning.⁸ A more general requirement, even if it alludes to professional competence (e.g., the nominee is a “master teacher”) does not suffice.

Programs can communicate their support for these criteria in many ways, including by sending letters to principals or other school district staff who select cooperating teachers, or by including these criteria in contracts with school districts where student teachers are placed. If none of the documents we receive addresses the issue of required qualifications of cooperating teachers, the program is presumed not to have publicly disseminated requirements and does not satisfy Indicator 14.2.

Handbook listings of *responsibilities* of the cooperating teacher that include, for example, “mentoring the student teacher,” do not suffice as selection criteria.

Requirements that cooperating teachers have positive evaluations generally do not meet this standard, as negative evaluations are so rare that a positive evaluation does not offer a way to distinguish between a good teacher and a great one. However, if an IHE indicates that a cooperating teacher must receive a score at the highest level of the state’s evaluation system, and the state: a) requires student achievement to be the preponderant criterion in teacher evaluations, and b) has four or more levels of proficiency in the evaluation system, the IHE’s selection criteria are deemed to satisfy the “effective teaching” criteria above.

In some cases, this indicator can be met in whole or part by reference to state regulations if the program is located any of the states (listed in the table below) in which state policy establishes criteria related to mentoring, criteria related to effective teaching, or both.⁹ However, the program must specifically mention the regulations in its communications with district administrators: Programs cannot earn credit based on state regulations simply by being located in a state with beneficial regulations.

⁶ For either part of Indicator 14.2 to be met, satisfactory language has to be communicated to school district personnel before the cooperating teacher is selected. If relevant language is found in a document conveyed to school district personnel after selection, the information is not considered relevant for analysis. Similarly, if relevant language is found in a document that is not conveyed to school district personnel, it is not considered relevant for analysis.

⁷ A one session “orientation” that covers many topics, including mentoring, is not considered equivalent to a mentoring course.

⁸ This positive impact may be determined by any means, including—but not restricted to—standardized test scores.

⁹ State regulations change over time. Because most documents used in TPR 2013 and 2014 were collected before we began evaluations for TPR 2013, until now we have used regulations that were in effect at the time we began rating the student teaching standard. This table will be updated for the next version of the review.

State regulations regarding qualifications of cooperating teachers (CTs)

State	Requirement that CTs be effective as demonstrated by a positive impact on student learning	Requirement that CTs have mentoring skills and/or take mentoring training
Arkansas		X
Connecticut		X
Florida	X	X
Kentucky		X
Louisiana		X
Maryland		X
New Jersey		X
North Dakota		X
Tennessee	X	X
Texas		X
Washington		X
Wisconsin		X

Because elements similar to those in indicator 14.2 have been incorporated into indicator 14.3, we report our findings for indicator 14.2 but do not include them in our overall score for this standard.

Indicator 14.3

Satisfaction of Indicator 14.3 requires evidence that a program has a consistent, formal method to collect the substantive information necessary to participate actively in the selection of cooperating teachers.¹⁰ If the information allows the program to screen cooperating teachers according to either or both of the criteria described in 14.2, additional scoring credit is awarded.¹¹

Collection of substantive information can only be demonstrated by documents conveying this information,¹² which are to be completed by school district personnel and transmitted to the IHE before selection of cooperating teachers, or by a clear statement in a contract between the IHE and the district that the IHE will not accept new or returning cooperating teachers who do not meet stated criteria.¹³ A general statement regarding “cooperative”

¹⁰ This information need not be related to criteria for selection evaluated in Indicator 14.2. However, information on the individual’s skills as a teacher, beyond number of years of experience or area of certification, must be included. For example, a principal might be asked to comment on a teacher’s classroom management or communication skills.

¹¹ Because **Connecticut** law gives school districts complete control over the selection of cooperating teachers, programs located in **Connecticut** are exempted from evaluation on this indicator.

¹² Or references to such documents in a contract between the IHE and school districts.

¹³ The one exception to the requirement of such documentary evidence is the presence of an IHE’s “right of refusal” of a cooperating teacher in a contract between an IHE and a school district. Although this may only be used in the case of teachers who previously served as cooperating teachers and were found to be unsatisfactory, its rarity suggests that it may also connote a more substantive selection process involving all nominated teachers.

selection processes involving the IHE and school districts is not sufficient to demonstrate such a process.¹⁴ Likewise, a statement that the IHE “assigns” or “places” student teachers with cooperating teachers does not demonstrate an active role in the process of selecting cooperating teachers. This language is taken to refer simply to a pairing of individuals after identification of cooperating teachers has already been made by the school district.

As we evaluate this indicator, our goal is to identify the policies and procedures most likely to be followed because they are communicated in writing to all of the individuals involved. In the case of conflicting information about the cooperating teacher selection process provided by different documents, in which a preponderance of evidence could not be established, the following order of authority is used, as it represents a decreasing likelihood that the document is read and considered binding by both IHE staff and school district staff with responsibility for selecting cooperating teachers:

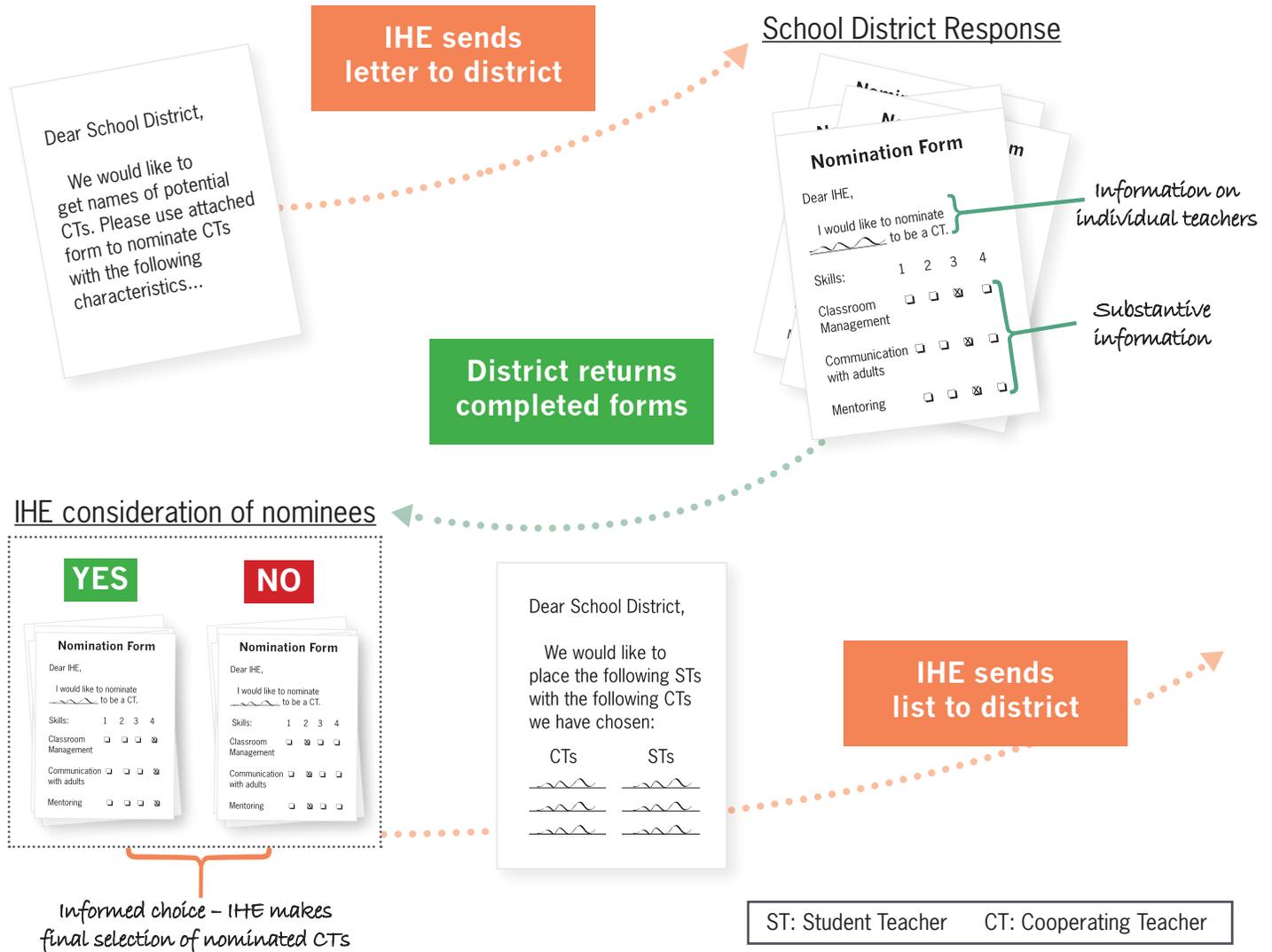
- Contracts between IHEs and school districts regarding student teaching placements, with contracts on IHE letterhead most authoritative
- Correspondence between the IHE and school district (including nomination or application forms)
- Student teaching handbooks or similar handbooks provided to principals or other school district personnel
- Documents created by school districts to communicate with the IHE or their own personnel regarding student teaching

Common misconceptions about how analysts evaluate the Student Teaching Standard:

- *When we say that institutions should take an “active role” in selection of cooperating teachers, we exclude the possibility of their working cooperatively with school districts. An “active role” in the selection of cooperating teachers does not mean that programs chose cooperating teachers on their own. It does require that they collect information, beyond years of experience or area of certification, that reveals potential cooperating teachers’ abilities, and choose among nominees based on this information. As evidenced by programs that do so, choices can be made in a cooperative manner—for example by requesting that principals comment on the mentorship and instructional skills of teachers they nominate.*
- *A program plays an active role in the selection of cooperating teachers if it refuses to place new student teachers with cooperating teachers who have been previously unsuccessful in that role. While evaluating returning cooperating teachers is useful, it does not replace a thorough screening of all new cooperating teachers. To the teacher candidate, who has only one chance to learn from the student teaching experience, it is little relief to learn that she or he will be, at best, moved to a new classroom after spending perhaps half a semester with an insufficiently screened cooperating teacher who turned out to be inadequate.*
- *Stating the responsibilities of a cooperating teacher is the same as stating selection criteria. For example, a handbook may say that a cooperating teacher must provide frequent feedback to his or her mentee. However, this is not the same as requiring that the cooperating teacher has demonstrated mentorship skill or attended mentorship training, before a student teacher is placed in her classroom.*

¹⁴ In the course of carrying out previous studies, we have found that the majority of IHEs stating that they use a “cooperative” process in fact accept any cooperating teacher nominated by school district officials unless the IHE had a previous negative experience with that cooperating teacher. Selection of new cooperating teachers is therefore entirely delegated to the school district. Such a process might involve: a) IHE communication to school district personnel (usually a principal) requesting placements, often specifying the number, grade levels, and/or subjects, along with required characteristics, of cooperating teachers; b) a school district personnel indication to the IHE of the number of placements available, providing the names and years of experience of nominated cooperating teachers—and little else; and c) the IHE indication of which teacher candidate will be placed with each teacher.

How an IHE can participate actively in the selection of cooperating teachers



In cases where documents are to be submitted to us by an IHE, if a program indicates to us (either in writing or by failing to provide such documents in response to our request)¹⁵ that no documents exist of the types relevant to a particular indicator, we conclude that the program could not have established the policies and procedures needed to satisfy the indicator.

If materials are not provided by an IHE, we search the IHE’s website, request information held by school districts, and use a variety of other approaches to assemble documents relevant to this standard. In these cases, we conclude that a program has failed to establish relevant policies and procedures only if we are able to obtain the documents most central to each indicator. For 14.1, we cannot assign a score unless we obtain a student teaching handbook or a similar document in which required observations would customarily be described. For 14.2 and 14.3 we require materials that reveal the IHE’s communication with school districts regarding criteria for or role in selection of cooperating teachers. In many cases both indicators can be evaluated using, at minimum, a letter from program staff to school district administrators, a form completed by school district staff, contracts between programs and districts, or the equivalent. In addition, contracts between programs and districts can often be used to evaluate 14.3, although by themselves they rarely provide adequate support for a decision on 14.1 or 14.2.

¹⁵ The majority of our requests to public universities were formal requests in accordance with state public records law, which requires that public agencies produce all existing documents in the categories specified.

In some cases, we are able to calculate an overall program score even if one or two indicators cannot be evaluated. This is true even when, if all the indicators in question are met, the program would not receive a higher overall score.

The Student Teaching Standard was evaluated for every program in the *Review* for which sufficient information could be obtained by February 2014. A cutoff date was necessary to allow sufficient time for processing and scoring of materials already received. Documents collected after this deadline will be used for evaluation in the next edition of the *Review*.

Examples of what satisfies or does not satisfy the standard's indicators

Five or more observations with written feedback (Indicator 14.1)

✓ - fully satisfies the indicator	~ - partially satisfies the indicator	✗ - does not satisfy the indicator
<p>The student teacher is observed and provided written feedback at least five times during the student teaching placement.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>The university supervisor will make three to five observation visits during the first placement plus an initial get-acquainted visit and two to four visits during the second placement. Written feedback is provided following each visit, as is the required post-observation conference.</i> <p>Note: This program requires a minimum of five observations with written feedback over the full period of the student teaching placement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>The university supervisor will visit the student teacher in the classroom for observation a minimum of five times following the introductory visit. An observation form is completed during each visit.</i> ■ <i>The university supervisor will formally observe the student teacher three times. The content-area advisor will observe an additional two times. Both will provide feedback on the department's observation form.</i> 	<p>The student teacher is observed and provided written feedback four times during the student teaching placement.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>The university supervisor will personally visit the supervised teacher in the assigned institution setting at least five times: once for introductory purposes and four times to complete formal observations and record feedback via the Student Teaching Observation Record (SOR).</i> ■ <i>The university supervisor will conduct an orientation at the beginning of each eight-week placement with the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. The university supervisor will make a minimum of two formal observations per eight-week assignment for a total of four or more observations.</i> 	<p>The student teacher is observed and provided written feedback three or fewer times during the student teaching placement, or there is no requirement regarding the number of observations.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>The university supervisor will complete the Student Teaching Observation form at least once per placement. (For a program that requires two placements.)</i> ■ <i>The university supervisor will visit the student teacher at least six times during the semester. (There is no guidance about providing written feedback for all visits.)</i> ■ <i>The university supervisor will observe the student teacher throughout the semester.</i> ■ <i>It is recommended that the university supervisor observe the student teacher seven times. (Emphasis added.)</i>

Observations spaced at regular intervals (Indicator 14.1)

✓ - fully satisfies the indicator	✗ - does not satisfy the indicator
<p>The student teacher is observed at regular intervals throughout student teaching.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>The university supervisor will observe the student teacher twice in the first placement and three times in the second.</i>■ <i>The university supervisor should conduct observations throughout the semester — at the beginning of the classroom experience, during the middle and again at the end of the student teaching experience.</i>■ <i>Observations will be spaced at regular intervals.</i>■ <i>The university supervisor will visit approximately every other week throughout the semester.</i>■ <i>The university supervisor will observe four times during the semester, twice before the mid-term evaluation and twice after the mid-term evaluation.</i>■ <i>The university supervisor is responsible for completing midterm and final evaluations of the student teacher. (If it is clear that the midterm and final evaluations are summative in nature and are informed by observations of the student teacher by the university supervisor, the indicator is satisfied.)</i>	<p>The student teacher is not observed at regular intervals throughout student teaching, there is no requirement regarding the spacing of observations, or the relevant language is inadequate.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>It is recommended that the university supervisor observe the student teacher every three weeks. (Emphasis added.)</i>

Communicates to school districts that cooperating teachers must be capable mentors (Indicator 14.2)

✓ - fully satisfies the indicator	✗ - does not satisfy the indicator
<p>The program communicates to the school district that cooperating teachers must be capable mentors or requires cooperating teachers to attend a course on mentoring skills.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>The cooperating teacher must have skills as a mentor of teacher candidates.</i>■ <i>The cooperating teacher must be able to provide feedback and work collaboratively.</i>■ <i>The cooperating teacher must attend a multiday training on mentorship skills.</i>	<p>The program does not communicate to school districts that cooperating teachers must be capable mentors (as opposed to willing mentors), or the relevant language is inadequate.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>The cooperating teacher is willing to mentor a student teacher.</i>■ <i>The cooperating teacher will attend an orientation on his or her responsibilities.</i>■ <i>The cooperating teacher must be a master teacher with at least three years of experience in the relevant grade level.</i>■ <i>The cooperating teacher must be highly qualified with certification and tenure.</i>■ <i>Responsibilities of cooperating teachers include mentoring a student teacher on instructional practices.</i>

Communicates to school districts that cooperating teachers must be effective instructors (Indicator 14.2)

✓ - fully satisfies the indicator	✗ - does not satisfy the indicator
<p>The program communicates to the school district that cooperating teachers must be effective instructors (as measured by student performance).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>Please approve those teachers who have demonstrated effectiveness in the following areas: 1) their pedagogy, 2) their record regarding student learning and 3) their record regarding the socio-emotional aspects of the classroom.</i>■ <i>The District Agrees...</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>The Cooperating Teacher will meet the following qualifications...</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ <i>5. Exemplify excellence in teaching by demonstrating a positive impact on student learning.</i>■ <i>Following Florida state regulations, the cooperating teacher must have skills to positively affect student performance.</i>	<p>The program does not communicate to school districts that cooperating teachers must be effective instructors, or the relevant language is inadequate.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>The cooperating teacher must be a master teacher with at least three years of experience in the relevant grade level.</i>■ <i>The teacher must be highly qualified with certification and tenure.</i>■ <i>The cooperating teacher must have strong classroom management skills enabling him or her to maintain class control.</i>

Asserts critical role in the selection of cooperating teachers (Indicator 14.3)

✓ - fully satisfies the indicator	~ - partially satisfies the indicator	✗ - does not satisfy the indicator
<p>There is documentary evidence that the program asserts its critical role in the selection of cooperating teachers AND screens prospective cooperating teachers for effectiveness and mentorship skill, as defined in indicator 14.2.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cooperating teacher recommendation form asks the principal to “Please briefly describe how the Host Teacher has demonstrated a positive impact on student learning in your school.” ■ Cooperating teacher recommendation form says, “Dear administrator: Please complete the attached recommendation form indicating whether _____ (prospective cooperating teacher’s name) has the following skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication 2. Observation 	<p>There is documentary evidence that the program asserts its critical role in the selection of cooperating teachers.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cooperating teacher application form asks: <i>What previous experience do you have with mentoring? What do you consider to be your strengths as a teacher?</i> ■ The IHE has “right of refusal” language in a contractual agreement which states: <i>The university is not obligated to place student teachers with cooperating teachers or mentors who do not meet established criteria.</i> 	<p>There is no documentary evidence that the program asserts its critical role in the selection of cooperating teachers, or the relevant language is inadequate.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The university will work in collaboration with the partner school to select a cooperating teacher. ■ To the administrator: <i>Following is a list of student teachers for the upcoming semester. Please choose teachers to serve as cooperating teachers and enter the teacher’s name next to the student teacher’s.</i> ■ The university will assign the following student teachers to qualified teachers from the school district.