

Act 91 WCU Substitute Teaching While Student Teaching Policy

Revised January 2022

Expires June 2023

The Substitute Teaching Permit for Prospective Educators became effective on September 11, 2016, with the passage of Act 86 of 2016. The expiration date on this provision has been extended indefinitely. An amendment to the Act 86 of 2016 was passed in 2021. Act 91 of 2021 became effective on December 17, 2021. The provisions of this amendment are set to expire on June 30, 2023.

WCU's College of Education and Social Work policy, **relative to student teachers**, regarding *Act 86 of 2016* and *Act 91 of 2021* permitting prospective teachers to act as substitute teachers are outlined in this document. The provisions in the new law Act 91 of 2021 and the revisions to the current WCU Substitute Teaching While Student Teaching Policy will expire on June 30, 2023. The guidelines below only apply to West Chester University student teachers during their assigned student teaching placement(s).

NOTE: All decisions relating to student teacher readiness and responsibilities will be determined by the mentor teacher, university supervisor and student teacher.

Portion of **Act 91** most relevant to this policy

Section 1219. Substitute Teaching Policy.--By February 15, 2022, each teacher preparation program approved by the department shall adopt a policy regarding allowing an individual undertaking a student teacher program under 22 Pa. Code § 354.25(f) (relating to preparation program curriculum) and satisfying the requirements of section 1201.1(1) to teach as a substitute in exchange for financial compensation, if the individual has received at least one satisfactory observation related to the individual's student teacher program. A teacher preparation program policy may not prohibit substitute teaching by individuals who have received at least one satisfactory observation related to their student teacher program.

Assumption

1. School districts and West Chester University's teacher preparation programs desire to partner in good faith so that both the development of the student teacher is appropriately supported during the *student teaching* experience and the needs of the school district for substitute teachers can be partially alleviated with the use of qualified student teachers in their buildings.

Context

1. Student teachers are enrolled in a WCU credit bearing course called *student teaching* and are paying tuition for the experience of *student teaching* under the daily mentoring of a cooperating teacher and supervision by a university faculty member.
2. The Pennsylvania Department of Education provides minimum requirements for *student teaching*. These requirements must be met for an individual to be recommended for certification in Pennsylvania. A minimum of 12-weeks of supervised *student teaching* is required by PDE. WCU requires 15-weeks of *student teaching*.
3. West Chester University has specific requirements for the awarding of a degree and the PDE-approved teacher preparation programs within the College of Education and Social Work have additional requirements for students who are participating in *student teaching*.
4. West Chester University is forever grateful to the school sites who host our student teachers.

Requests of the School District (School Site/Education Facility/Childcare Center)

1. School districts who wish to use a WCU student teacher as a substitute teacher establish a process for providing the “locally issued permit”, as described in the legislation, to the student teacher.
2. If student teachers are being considered for substitute teaching, the process for becoming an approved substitute teacher is communicated to the student teacher directly.
3. School districts should give student teachers the opportunity to decline an offer to act as a substitute teacher on any given day, just like other substitute teachers.
4. School districts make efforts to inform building administrators that only approved student teachers are to be used as substitute teachers.
5. Building administrators adhere to this *Act 91 Substitute Teaching While Student Teaching Policy* provided by West Chester University.
6. School districts may enact stricter guidelines for using student teachers as substitute teachers or choose not to use student teachers as substitute teachers.

Responsibilities of the University/University Supervisor Assigned to the Student Teacher

1. University supervisors will observe their WCU student teachers on a schedule determined collaboratively by the student teaching triad (student teacher, cooperating teacher and university supervisor).
2. University supervisors will use an abbreviated Danielson Framework for Teaching Evaluation form, “*Act 91 Satisfactory Observation Checklist*”, within the first 4 weeks of the student teaching experience to help determine a student teacher’s eligibility to substitute teach.
3. Student teachers who receive a “satisfactory” rating on all criteria within *the checklist* will be identified as *Eligible for Substitute Teaching*.
4. The university supervisor and the student teacher will initial a copy of the Satisfactory Observation Checklist. The form will be given to the student teacher and a copy will be submitted to the Office of Clinical Experiences and Candidate Services.
5. If the student teacher is deemed *Not Yet Eligible for Substitute Teaching*, the Satisfactory Observation Checklist will be used in subsequent observations until an evaluation of *Eligible for Substitute Teaching* is reached.

Directions to University Supervisor:

Use the checklist below within the first 4 weeks of student teaching to rate the student teacher in the areas of Classroom Environment and Instruction criteria taken from the Danielson Framework for Teaching:

Declare on the document either:

- 1) “Eligible for Substitute Teaching”, meaning that all criteria listed in each domain were rated satisfactorily by the university supervisor.
- 2) “Not Yet Eligible for Substitute Teaching”, meaning the student was rated Unsatisfactory on 1 or more criteria in either domain.
 - a) If the candidate is rated as “Not Yet Eligible for Substitute Teaching,” a follow-up observation should be scheduled within a reasonable amount of time (ideally within 2-weeks) by the university supervisor. At the follow-up observation, the process is repeated until an “Eligible for

Substitute Teaching” rating is documented and turned into the Office of Clinical Experiences and Candidate Services.

Responsibilities of the Student Teacher

1. Student teachers who desire to be considered for substitute teaching while student teaching will initiate the school district’s process for becoming an approved substitute teacher. A student teacher is not obligated to act as a substitute teacher during the student teaching semester, but those who believe they may be interested in doing so should initiate the process as soon as possible.
2. Student teachers will submit all required paperwork when applying for an Act 86 permit (process below) to the school district or substitute teaching service in order to become an approved substitute teacher.
3. Student teachers who complete the appropriate steps to become an approved substitute teacher and receive an *Eligible to Substitute Teach* designation by their university supervisor on the Satisfactory Observation Checklist may accept substitute teaching opportunities under the following conditions:
 - * *Can substitute within their host teacher’s classroom*
 - * *Can substitute no more than 10 days total within the host teacher’s classroom*
4. Student teachers must notify their university supervisor as soon as possible about any substitute teaching assignments and keep a log of those assignments.

Requirements for the Act 86 permit:

An eligible education student:

- *Must be currently enrolled in a PA college or university teacher preparation program regionally accredited and approved by PDE;*
- *Must have completed 60 semester hours or the equivalent at an accredited PA college or university; and*
- *Must be eligible under § 111 (criminal history) and § 1109(a) (good moral character, at least 18 years of age, U.S. citizen, etc.) as well as have appropriate child abuse clearances.*

Process:

- *The permit is issued by the chief school administrator of the LEA (school district, charter school, area vocational-technical school, or intermediate unit) to the eligible education student.*
- *The student must present verification of enrollment status and completed semester hours to the LEA.*
- *The LEA must verify the requirements for criminal history, child abuse clearances, and Good Moral Character.*
- *The governing body of the LEA will fix the salary paid to the student.*
- *Substitute time is not eligible for Pennsylvania State Employees Retirement System or School Employees Retirement System retirement credit.*

West Chester University Student Teaching Evaluation
Act 91 Satisfactory Observation Checklist

Student Teacher:
Grade/Subject:

School:
Date/Time:

Lesson Summary:

Domain 2: Classroom Environment

Satisfactory

Unsatisfactory

2c: Managing Classroom Procedures
2d: Managing Student Behavior

Evidence in the Lesson:

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Domain 3: Instruction

Satisfactory

Unsatisfactory

3a: Communicating with Students
3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
3c: Engaging students in Learning
3d: Using Assessment in Instruction
3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

Evidence in the Lesson:

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-
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Conclusion:

Eligible for Substitute Teaching

Not Yet Eligible for Substitute Teaching

Teacher Candidate Initials:

Observer Initials:

Date:

Sample Form Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

According to the *West Chester University College of Education and Social Work* guidelines regarding substitute teaching while student teaching, I am formally requesting that I be considered for substitute teaching while student teaching in your school district. Below are the signatures of my mentor teacher for student teaching and university supervisor, acknowledging that in their certified professional opinion, my skills, knowledge and disposition are such that I would be an effective substitute teacher within my student teaching classroom.

Sincerely,

Student Teacher's Name: _____

Student Teacher's Area of Certification: _____

Mentor Teacher Print Name/Title

University Supervisor Print Name/Title

Mentor Teacher Signature

University Supervisor Signature

Date

Date

Act 86 and Act 91 Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does a student teacher have to act as a substitute teacher if asked by the host school?

A: No. A student teacher should not feel pressured to act as a substitute teacher before they feel they are ready. The student teacher, like any other substitute teacher, has the option to accept or decline an offer to substitute teacher.

Q: If a student teacher is deemed eligible to substitute teach, does that mean that they will automatically pass student teaching?

A: No. The Satisfactory Observation Checklist is based on one observation. A student teacher's final grade is determined by the entirety of their work throughout the semester and many more factors are involved in determining a final grade.

Q: Does the time a student teacher spends substitute teaching under Act 91 count as student teaching time?

A: No. When a student teacher is acting as a substitute teacher, they are a paid employee of the school district and not a student teacher. This is why student teachers are limited within the legislation as to the number of days they may act as a substitute teacher while student teaching.

Q: Can a student teacher accept a substitute teaching position outside of the certification area they are seeking?

A: No. Student teachers are only to substitute teach in the same certification area as they are seeking.

Q: Can a student teacher be asked to "cover" a classroom for a brief period of time, in the absence of a certified teacher?

A: There is a liability for the school district when the student teacher is not being supervised by a certified teacher but is "in charge" of students. It is understood that educators assist for the benefit of the learners when needed, and WCU would want our student teachers to be that type of educator. We also understand that there may be clear procedures at the district level for teachers "covering" other classrooms. This is where clear communication is crucial. We trust that school district leaders would be extremely cautious in using student teachers to "cover" classrooms in the absence of a certified teacher.

Q: Can a university supervisor observe a student teacher while the student teacher is acting as a substitute teacher?

A: Possibly, but this is not recommended. There may be a time when a scheduled student teaching observation and a last-minute substitute teaching experience in the host teacher's classroom fall on the same day. If the university supervisor is unable to schedule another time to observe, they may choose to observe the student teacher.

Q: What if I have a special permit from the school district in which I am student teaching and have been substituting prior to student teaching?

A: You still must wait for approval from your mentor teacher and university supervisor to be excused from student teaching to substitute teach. The guidelines in this document still apply to you.

Q: If my student teaching site is not “in session”, but I am approved to substitute-teach in another school district that is “in session” on that day, may I substitute in that school district during the student teaching semester?

A: Yes. This policy was put in place to regulate student teachers during the days they are assigned to their student teaching classroom only. Student teachers may use their time outside of their assignment as they see fit as long as they are continuing to uphold the PDE Code of Conduct for educators. Student teachers are NOT excused from in-service days at their host school for substitute teaching purposes.

Q: What if the school district I am in uses a “sub service” such as Kelly Educational Staffing, for example?

A: You would have to obtain approval through the “sub service” but those details would be provided by the school district.

Q: If my placement changes after the midterm can I still act as a substitute?

A: Yes. Once you become eligible to substitute teach in your new placement and if the school district decides they would like to use you in the student teaching classroom as a substitute teacher.

Q: Will I get paid for the days I act as a substitute teacher?

A: Yes. The legislation indicates that “...the individual shall receive a fixed salary...” This will be determined by the school district or sub service.