

WCU Substitute Teaching While Student Teaching Policy

From PDE:

The Substitute Teaching Permit for Prospective Educators became effective on September 11, 2016 with the passage of Act 86 of 2016. The provision is set to expire on June 30, 2021.

This permit allows an education student in an approved Pennsylvania teacher preparation program who meets the specific requirements in the law to be hired by a Local Education Agency (LEA) in a controlled salaried permit position.

Requirements:

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.*

Service Permissions:

- *The permit is valid for one year and allows the student to substitute teach for no more than 10 days per school year for a single teacher and not more than 20 days for multiple employees per school year.*
- *The permit may be renewed for one additional year if the student provides documentation of continued enrollment in the preparation program and the completion of an additional 15 credit hours or its equivalent.*

WCU's College of Education and Social Work policy, **relative to student teachers**, regarding Act 86 of 2016 permitting prospective teachers to act as substitute teachers are outlined in this document. The policy below only apply to West Chester University student teachers during their assigned student teaching placement.

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

WCU student teachers will be permitted to act as a substitute teacher during their student teaching experience under the following conditions.

WCU student teachers:

1. Must be Board approved as a Student Teacher who may be used to substitute.
 - This process will be different for each school district and may not be an option for all student teaching placements. There should be clear communication between the school site and the student teacher about this option. Both parties must agree to the use of a student teacher as a substitute teacher.
 - A locally issued permit will be provided by the school site.
2. Must obtain a positive recommendation from their Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor prior to being used as a substitute teacher in their student teaching classroom.
 - Provide evidence of at least two observations and meeting with Danielson; must be a minimum of "basic" in all categories
3. May not be used as a substitute until after completing the required minimum time in the student teaching experience
 - For non-dual majors – student teachers can substitute teach after completing 12 full weeks of student teaching
 - For double major/dual majors – student teachers can substitute teach after completing 6 weeks and 3 days in the first half placement and after completing 6 weeks and 3 days in the second half placement
4. Shall be the substitute teacher in the host teacher's classroom when there is a need for coverage in host teacher's classroom or another classroom in the building.
 - May NOT substitute outside of their host teacher's classroom. If there is a need for a substitute teacher in another classroom, PDE suggests that the cooperating teacher be assigned to the "other classroom" for the day and

the student teacher remains in his or her “student teaching classroom” as a substitute.

5. May serve as a substitute teacher for no more than five (5) days, as a dual major and ten (10) days as a non-dual major.

- May not use your five approved absences for this opportunity

6. May be observed as a student teacher at the same time they are acting as a substitute teacher in their assigned “student teaching classroom.”

7. Must notify their University Supervisor immediately once they learn that they will be substitute teaching rather than student teaching.

8. Must be officially employed by the LEA as a paid substitute and the LEA will determine the fixed salary of the student teacher when acting as the substitute teacher.

9. Are in good standing and are representative of a quality West Chester University student

Some LEAs may have additional restrictions such as:

10. May only be used to substitute **IF** all other possible District substitutes have not taken the open position and District teachers will be in the position of having to “cover” the position for the day. (i.e. – using the student teacher due to a need for bargaining unit coverage of another class)

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 outlined below as soon as possible.

Suggested process for obtaining a *Substitute Teaching Permit for Prospective Teachers*

Student teachers should:

1. Contact the school district’s Superintendent’s Office or Human Resource Office to determine if the school district is willing to offer a “Substitute Teaching Permit for Prospective Teachers.” This policy should be shared with the school district with the initial inquiry.

2. Complete whatever process is outlined by the school district for obtaining this special permit. According to the legislation it is likely the following will be the minimum required.

- a. verification that the candidate is currently enrolled in a teacher preparation program. Student teachers will receive a letter verifying this with their student teaching assignment or during opening seminar.

b. verification that the candidate has completed at least 60 hours of coursework at a college or university within the Commonwealth accredited by a regional accrediting agency. This will be included in the letter received with the student teaching placement for undergraduate students. Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate students should be able to obtain a substitute teaching permit by virtue of their undergraduate degree.

c. other items as determined by the school district such as clearances, resume, etc.

3. If the student teacher plans to pursue this option, they can access the required form letter on the D2L student teaching site. The student teacher will arrange to discuss their plans and obtain the necessary signatures from their mentor teacher and student teaching supervisor.

4. The student teacher should then submit the completed letter to the appropriate office in the school district. The submission of this letter notifies the school district of the availability of the student teacher to act as a substitute teacher once all approvals are in place. After the student teaching semester has ended, the graduate may substitute in the school district as frequently as requested but no more than the total number of days designated in the legislation prior to certification.

Sample Form Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

According to the *West Chester University College of Education and Social Work* policy 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 during the *first 8-weeks/6-weeks and 3 days* of 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

Letter of Completion:

The WCU Office of Certification as part of the Dean's Office in the College of Education and Social Work provides a letter as long as candidate has requested one via the [Intent Form](#) and the following content is satisfied:

1. All Candidates:

Applied in the PA Department of Education's Teacher Information Management System (TIMS); candidates cannot apply until the month of their program completion

Passed or achieved qualifying scores on all PA test requirements with evidence of official score reports

Completed all TK20 content including the Candidate Signature Page

2. Degree Candidates:

Completed all academic requirements including final grades and degree conferral; degrees take 4-5 weeks to be conferred after final grades post; all majors/minors/programs must clear their students to graduate before the WCU Registrar's Office can awarded degrees

3. Post-Baccalaureate Candidates:

Completed all academic requirements including final grades per your Approved Program of Study (APS)

Frequently Asked Questions by the Student Teacher

Q1: 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 policy in this document still apply to you.

Q2: What if I want to substitute teach in a specific school district during the second half of my student teaching assignment? Will that be taken into consideration when getting placed for student teaching?

A: No. The sole purpose of the student teaching semester is to provide a student teaching experience with an excellent mentor. Substitute teaching will be an option for those student teachers who demonstrate a readiness for solo teaching and only in school districts that choose to offer the “special permit”.

Q3: 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.

Q4: Do I have to accept a substitute teaching opportunity during the student teaching semester if I do not want to?

A: Student teachers who go through this process and identify themselves as a potential substitute teacher within the school district should be willing to act as a substitute teacher if requested but always have the option of declining any request to substitute teach, much like a certified teacher who is substitute teaching.

Q5: 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.

Q6: What if a school district requests that I act as a substitute teacher prior to midterm?

A: You should decline any invitation to substitute teach during the student teaching semester prior to midterm because WCU College of Education and Social policy do not excuse student teachers from their assignment to act as a substitute teacher prior to midterm.

Q7: Will my performance while acting as a substitute teacher affect my evaluations as a student teacher?

A: Yes. Since this policy permits student teachers to substitute teach in their “student teaching classroom” only, they could be observed during that time. Thus, their teaching would be evaluated during that observation.

Q8: What if I change school districts after the midterm of the semester?

A: The school district who is hosting you after midterm will have to decide whether or not to provide you a substitute teaching permit based on the recommendation of your first-half cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. You will not be excused from student teaching to return to the school district of your first placement, if in a different school district than your second placement.

Q9: If my placement after midterm is significantly different (such as special education as opposed to regular education or grades K – 6 as opposed to 7 – 12), can I still act as a substitute?

A: Yes. It will be up to the school district to decide if they would like to use you in the student teaching classroom as a substitute teacher and it will be up to you to accept or not accept their assignment.

Q10: 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.

Q11: Can I return to my first 8-week placement to substitute if different from my second 8-week placement?

A: No. This policy permit student teachers to act as a paid substitute teacher only in their second 8-week classroom.

Q12: The midpoint of the student teaching semester typically occurs after 8-weeks of student teaching. May I start subbing prior to the midpoint if I complete 8-weeks of student teaching prior to the midpoint?

A: No. The “first 8-weeks” is just another way to indicate the time prior to the midpoint of the semester. We will not be counting the days in order to determine when you are eligible; rather we are saying you are eligible after the midpoint of the semester, regardless of the specific day you begin. In short, student teachers may begin to substitute after midterm and no sooner. Student teachers who start before the official start of the semester will NOT be credited with additional time and those who start after the beginning of the student teaching semester will NOT be penalized.

Q13: Can I substitute teach in my “student teaching classroom” if I am participating in the international student teaching experience (i.e. student teaching for only 12 weeks)?

A: Yes, if your supervisor agrees you are ready and only after midterm. The policy stated above apply to your situation.