



Educator Preparation Provider/Local Education Agency Primary Partnership Agreement

Educator Preparation Provider (EPP)	Tennessee Wesleyan University
Local Education Agency (LEA)	Athens City Schools
Academic Year of Agreement	2026-2027

EPP Contact/Designee	
Name: Melanie Amburn	Title: Education Department Chair
Email: mamburn@tnwesleyan.edu	Phone Number: 865-567-5621

LEA Contact/Designee	
Name: Melody Armstrong	Title: Asst Director / Curriculum Supervisor
Email: marmstrong@athensk8.net	Phone Number: 423-745-2863

Certification (signatures verify partnership)	
EPP Head Administrator: Melanie Amburn	Title: Education Department Chair
Signature: 	Date: 7-21-26

LEA Head Administrator: Joe Barnett	Title: Director of Schools
Signature: 	Date: 7-21-2026

**Prompt
1**

Identify goals for recruiting high-quality candidates, including candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and diverse populations, and how evidence will be collected, shared, and used to increase the educator pipeline. *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

During the 2026-2027 reporting year, the EPP and the LEA will work to strengthen the partnership through the formalization of communication, information sharing, feedback, and more direct ways to open a direct pipeline of certified candidates. While formal partnerships have existed in the past between the LEA and the EPP, the goals identified for the 2026-2027 year are indicative of the depth of commitment and the collaborative nature of the partnership. The EPP will convene with its State and Primary Partners during the summer and fall 2026 to review the current collaborative practices and plans for continuous improvement based off previous communication. During summer and fall 2026 meetings, the EPP and LEAS will identify the appropriate representatives for the EPP and partner LEA, expectations for the formal partnership work will be reviewed and the Partnership meeting goals and objectives, inclusive of recruiting of high quality candidates, including candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and diverse populations, will be co-constructed and agreed upon, therefore setting the 2026-27 partnership goals. The collaboratively-developed goals for the 2026-27 reporting year are: *Identify the appropriate representative for the EPP and the partner LEA; *The EPP will plan an annual Partnership Data meeting to occur in the Spring 2027 at which the EPP and LEA will present data and set recruitment and selection goals for the 2027-28 reporting year along with indicators of success in increasing the educator pipeline; *The EPP and partner LEA will set mutually agreed upon dates to engage the partner LEA in Teacher Education Program interviews, to facilitate early exposure and opening of the pipeline between the partner LEA and the teacher candidates.* The EPP will communicate opportunities for teacher candidates to become involved in the partner LEA through tutoring opportunities, summer learning camps, and Kids Connection before and after school daycare. This early exposure to the partner LEA academic activities will help the partner LEA develop relationships with teacher candidates and open the pipeline for them as future employees.

At the Partnership Data meeting, the EPP will: *present program enrollment numbers to predict future numbers of Candidates prepared; * present the previous years' recruitment plan and outcomes; *present any updates on clinical experience, program, or curriculum changes; *review the Annual Report/Insights tool to inform recruitment efforts in high-needs areas as identified by the LEA's Human Capital Data report; *share with the LEA its Recruitment Plan which include data on high quality candidate recruitment and selectivity as well as inclusion of a broad range of backgrounds and diverse populations; *review clinical experience expectations to ensure the clinical experience meets the requirements per the Educator Preparation Policy. During the Partnership Data meeting, the LEA partner representative will: *provide upcoming critical areas of need in the district. This will include, but is not limited to, review of Human Capital Report data; *provide data related to employer satisfaction and provider impact for review; *address completer strengths and areas for improvement to help inform the program design of the EPP coursework. At the end of the Partnership Data meeting, the EPP and LEA will: * work together to discuss the shared data to forecast pipeline need and thus set the goals and outcomes for the subsequent reporting year to ensure a strategic and united recruitment effort.

**Prompt
2**

Describe the strategies and actions in place to co-select clinical educators and collaborate to prepare, evaluate, and support high-quality clinical educators, both provider and school-based, who demonstrate a positive impact on candidates' development and pre-k-12 students. *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

This agreement signifies the commitment of both the EPP and the partner LEA to collaborate for enhancement of the experience of clinical educators and their impact on the education preparation pipeline as well as positive impact on Pre-K-12 students in the LEA. The Clinical Experience Handbook will be discussed in the summer and fall 2026 meetings and collaborative changes will be made inside the Handbook. The fully revised Clinical Experience Handbook will be made available at the beginning of each academic year and then reviewed at the spring Partnership Data meeting for clarification purposes or to update to meet the current clinical experience requirements set by the Educator Preparation Policy. The Clinical Experience Handbook will be the shared resource that identifies the roles and responsibilities for clinical expectation and the provider and school-based clinical educators. The EPP and partner LEA will work together to identify qualified and effective school-based clinical educators. For each preparation program type, the LEA and EPP will identify the indicators of effectiveness for the clinical educators during the summer meeting. The LEA will provide to the EPP the school-based mentor's information, such as the mentor's name as it appears on the TDOE educator license, the TDOE educator license number and area(s) of certification and license type. This is to ensure that the mentor meets the requirements in TN Board of Education Educator Preparation Policy. If the clinical educator was involved with teacher candidates from the EPP during the previous school year, the information from teacher candidate and clinical supervisor surveys will be shared and used to select, prepare, evaluate, support, and retain high quality clinical educators. The EPP will request from the LEA recommendations of effective educators no longer employed by the LEA to serve as clinical educators. The LEA may invite the EPP to participate in the interview process for provider-based clinical educators. The EPP will assess clinical practice experience by soliciting feedback from program completers, school-based mentors, and provider-based clinical supervisors. Data will be summarized and shared with the LEA to address any areas for improvement in clinical experience. Clinical educators will receive actionable feedback on their performance through observation and assessment for purposes of improvement provided by the EPP and partner LEA. School and provider-based clinical educators will have the opportunity to participate in EPP and LEA training and professional development to increase their effectiveness as clinical educators. School-based clinical educators will sign an agreement that lists the expectations for any required training necessary to serve as a clinical educator. LEAS will allow EPP representatives to attend professional development opportunities as appropriate to stay informed of best practices in the field. EPP representatives will offer professional development based on partner LEA need. With the goal of retaining high-quality clinical educators, the LEA and EPP will work toward identifying ways the clinical educator is recognized for their work and training. The EPP will seek feedback from the clinical educators for the purpose of improving their experience and, in turn, increase the support and retention of high-quality clinical educators.

**Prompt
3**

Describe the design and implementation of clinical experiences, utilizing various modalities, of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on pre-k-12 students (For instructional leader programs, ensure how clinical experiences allow opportunities for candidates to practice applications of content knowledge and skills.). *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

In addressing the need for a high-quality teacher candidate, EPP Clinical Experience Protocols, as mutually-agreed upon by the district and the university, demand that prior to entering the clinical practice, the teacher candidate will have submitted a criminal history records check conducted by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The teacher candidate will have obtained a qualifying score on the ACT, SAT, or the reading, writing and math subtests of the CORE Praxis. The teacher candidate must have completed all required coursework, passed all required PRAXIS exams, and will have a minimum GPA of 2.75. In the provision of sufficient depth, breath and coherence, the district agrees to place the teacher candidate with level 4 and 5 educators in the classroom unless mutually agreed upon. Also as mutually agreed by the district and the EPP, in the provision of sufficient duration of the clinical experience, there will be two placements for each teacher candidate. The first placement is for eight weeks in length and the second placement is for seven weeks for a total of two placements in two settings. The placement will offer the teacher candidate the opportunity to work with all students, including those with diverse backgrounds and needs. The second placement will be in a grade level that ensures the breadth of the endorsement subject area and grade band area are experienced. Exposure to various modalities of instruction, such as in-person learning using direct instruction and individualized technology, may be available in the clinical experience. Teacher candidates will complete four evaluative observations during the semester. Teacher candidates will follow the partner LEA school schedule of holidays, professional development, etc. Teacher candidates will participate in all mentor teacher activities to include faculty meetings, bus duty, staff professional development, parent conferences, parent-teacher organization meetings, IEP meetings, etc. unless otherwise directed by the principal of the school. The clinical educator will work cooperatively and collaboratively with the TWU clinical supervisor to formatively evaluate and direct the activities of the teacher candidate in the interest of developing and evaluating instructional effectiveness and positive impact on the PreK-grade 12 students. The teacher candidate, with guidance from the clinical supervisor and educator, will plan, instruct, and assess students in preparation for the evaluative observations. In collaboration and mutual agreement with the partner LEA, the EPP has developed requirements for completion of student teaching clinical practice and has outlined the causes and procedures by which the clinical practice can be terminated. Collaboration with the director of student teaching as outlined in the Clinical Experience Handbook will ensure the termination process is completed with fidelity and integrity should an issue arise with a teacher candidate.

Prompt 4 Describe the process partners use in the program design, evaluation, and decision-making for continuous improvement. *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

Clinical educators from Tennessee Wesleyan University include university faculty and adjunct faculty. Faculty members were chosen based on identified selection criteria which include administrative, instructional, and leadership experience in PreK-grade 12 schools, both public and private. The search committee includes representatives from partner district administrative teams. In the selection of adjunct instructors, efforts are made to utilize experts from the partner districts who are highly qualified, thus strengthening partnerships and making valuable connections between practicing administrators and program candidates. To ensure that candidates are prepared to instruct and lead, the program is aligned with the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, CAEP Elementary Teacher Preparation Standards, ISTE instructional technology standards, and The TN State Board of Education Literacy Standards for Education Preparation Providers. The EPP works with partnering districts to design and provide extensive meaningful clinical experiences for candidates to practice application of course content knowledge and skills. As part of the required field experience, the candidates are expected to complete 10-40 field experience hours associated with each of the 28 professional education courses. Clinical experience educators provided by the LEA provide after-teaching feedback to the candidates for reinforcement and refinement of instructional skills. Candidates must reflect complete a written reflection on the after-teaching feedback provided by the clinical experience educator. This reflection is used to refine instructional skill. In the professional courses, teacher candidates must complete key assessments directly related to the depth and breadth of the field experiences. Candidates receive extensive instruction on the Explicit Direct Instructional Model and the TEAM teacher evaluation model. The TEAM model is used to evaluate student candidate planning, instruction, environment during the professional education program courses. The connections between sound and effective intellectual preparation and instruction in the classroom environment, strong student outcomes and positive teacher evaluations, as well as level of effectiveness determinations are emphasized throughout the process. Teacher Candidates participate in four evaluative observations using the TEAM approved model. This performance-based assessment and support system emphasizes, measures, and supports the skills and knowledge that all teachers need in the classroom. With respect for importance of this work to link theory and practice, reinforce coherence across the clinical and academic components of preparation and establish shared accountability between the EPP and teacher candidate, the EPP developed two courses specifically designed to oversee this learning. All teacher candidates must successfully participate and complete these courses. The EPP and partner LEA mutually agree to collaborate on implementation of direct measures to refine areas of challenge as well as reinforce areas of mastery. These measures include collaboration with university clinical supervisors and district personnel. Data collection from surveys completed by clinical experience supervisors, teacher candidates, and clinical educators provide important information to analyze in LEA partner meetings as well as during the Partnership Data meeting. Less formal, but just as valuable, information is obtained through direct contact between the EPP student teaching director and partner LEA administrators.

Prompt 5 Describe how partners will collaborate and make decisions to ensure candidate preparation is inclusive of LEA curricular content and materials. *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

The EPP and partner LEA collaborate and make decisions to ensure candidate preparation is inclusive of LEA curricula content and materials through several actions. First, the EPP instructional staff and department chair will collaborate with the partner LEA representatives to share information on curricular choices and strategic pieces of instructional materials. Discussion will surround the purpose and uses of that information within the professional course instruction of teacher candidates. EPP staff may be invited to attend professional development provided by the partner LEA to their staff over effective use of the materials. Second, inside the EPP professional course instruction, teacher candidates will be exposed to high quality instructional material selections from the partner LEA curriculum as much as possible so that the teacher candidates are familiar with the materials before their clinical experience. This collaboration ensures that EPP teacher candidates can effectively use the materials to support student growth more quickly and efficiently. EPP teacher candidates will be assessed within the professional course instruction on the effective use of high-quality instructional materials used by the partner LEA through demonstration during teaching of lessons and/or written assessments. A third and additional measure to inform decision making around instructional effectiveness of use of partner LEA curriculum within the professional courses is evaluative observations. These evaluative observations are based on assessment of mastery of planning, environment and instruction under the TEAM model. It is focused on student learning and principles from research and theory and serves as a measure of teacher candidate competency. With respect to importance of this work to link theory into practice, the EPP developed 2 courses specifically designed to oversee the candidate progress toward completion of these four evaluative observations and student teaching. Successful observations and evaluations using work with the partner LEA curriculum are mandatory for completion of the clinical experience and subsequent licensure.