

Program Handbook: A Guide for Teacher Candidates

**Middle Level
Education**

**Preparation to teach
in middle schools**



California State University
SAN MARCOS



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Education

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Welcome the Middle Level Education Program!

When people introduce themselves as middle school teachers, they often receive one of two responses: ***Bless you!*** Or ***Why?!***

Faculty in the Middle Level Education Program add a third response: ***How lucky you are!***

Although California is one of only five states in the nation without specific credentialing for the middle grades (the others are Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Utah), the School of Education at CSUSM works to fill that gap. For 28 years, the Middle Level Education Program has been preparing candidates to teach middle school. We do this because young adolescents (youth from 11 – 14 years of age) are in a unique stage of cognitive, social, and emotional development. They need teachers who not only understand them but also embrace their quirks and challenges.

Our commitment to middle schools and our appreciation of the students who inhabit them mean that all class take place on the campus of Woodland Park Middle School in the San Marcos Unified School District. We are surrounded by middle school students and teachers each day and often include them in our learning experiences. Through lessons on changes in the brain during this time in development, activities that bridge the gap between young adolescents desire to be “grown up” and their need to play, and discussions about balancing content with social-emotional learning, program faculty and candidates work collaboratively to support middle school students.

Middle school teachers say that they love the humor and “the daily expressed thanks” they receive. They also appreciate middle school students’ “limitless perspective,” “intelligent thoughts and goofy attitude,” and “their tenacity to problem solve.” Faculty in the program agree!

Teaching middle school is not always easy, but it is always rewarding and full of the unexpected. As one graduate says, “Middle school students are beginning to make big life choices about who they are going to be.” Being on this journey with them is an honor and a joy, and we are so glad you have joined the program!

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School of Education (SOE) Mission & Vision

Vision

To serve the educational needs of local, regional, and global communities, the School of Education advances innovative practice and leadership by generating, embracing, and promoting equitable and creative solutions.

Mission

The mission of the School of Education community is to collaboratively transform education. We:

- Create community through partnerships
- Promote and foster social justice and educational equity
- Advance innovative, student-centered practices
- Inspire reflective teaching and learning
- Conduct purposeful research
- Serve the School, College, University, and Community

Program of Study

The Middle Level Program prepares teachers to work with young adolescents in grades 5-9. Upon completion of all tests and other requirements, graduates of the program may hold a Multiple-Subject Credential and a Single Subject credential with Authorization to Teach English Learners. They will also receive a CSUSM-issued Certificate of Advanced Study in Middle Level Education.

Coursework is taught at a middle school site with class sessions and assignments geared to the particular needs of middle school teachers and young adolescent learners. Field experiences are planned and coordinated with a small number of partner middle schools. Supervision of the clinical practice experience is the shared responsibility of a university supervisor (a team member assigned to one school) and an on-site liaison at the middle school (a full-time employee at the site).

This series of courses has been specifically designed to prepare teachers for the diversity of languages often encountered in California public school classrooms. The authorization to teach English learners is met through the infusion of content and experiences within course requirements.

Student Learning Outcomes

The student (candidate) learning outcomes are defined by SB 2042 as [Teaching Performance Expectations \(TPEs\)](#). CSUSM School of Education adopted one additional TPE beyond the state requirements in order to explicitly address concepts stated in the SOE Mission Statement with a focus on social justice and educational equity.

Guiding Principles

As we prepare teachers to work with young adolescents, we ground our work in five themes:

- Learning happens in caring communities.
- Students are the center of our work.
- Teaching is the negotiation among theory, practice and students.
- Empowerment of students is essential to the students' meaningful participation in a democratic society.
- Education requires political action to achieve a just society.

AMLE's Characteristics of an Effective Middle School

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Educators value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them

Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning.

Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant.

Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches.

Varied and ongoing assessments advance learning as well as measure it.

Leadership and Organization

A shared vision developed by all stakeholders guides every decision.

Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about this age group, educational research, and best practices.

Leaders demonstrate courage and collaboration.

Ongoing professional development reflects best educational practices.

Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships.

Culture and Community

The school environment is inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive of all.

Every student's academic and personal development is guided by an adult advocate.

Comprehensive guidance and support services meet the needs of young adolescents.

Health and wellness are supported in curricula, school-wide programs, and related policies.

The school actively involves families in the education of their children.

The school includes community and business partners.

California Standards for the Teaching Profession

Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning

- Connecting students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests with learning goals.
- Using a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students' diverse needs.
- Facilitating learning experiences that promote autonomy, interaction, and choice.
- Engaging students in problem solving, critical thinking and other activities that make subject matter meaningful.
- Promoting self-directed, reflective learning for all students.

Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning

- Creating a physical environment that engages all students.
- Establishing a climate that promotes fairness and respect.
- Promoting social development and group responsibility.
- Establishing and maintaining standards for student behavior.
- Planning and implementing classroom procedures and routines that support student learning.

Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning

- Demonstrating knowledge of subject matter content and student development.
- Organizing curriculum to support student understanding of subject matter development.
- Developing student understanding through instructional strategies that are appropriate to the subject matter.
- Using materials, resources, and technologies to make subject matter accessible to students.

Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students

- Drawing on and valuing students' background, interests, and developmental learning needs.
- Establishing and articulating goals for student learning.
- Developing and sequencing instructional activities and materials for student learning.
- Modifying instructional plans to adjust for student needs.

Assessing Student Learning

- Establishing and communicating learning goals for all students.
- Collecting and using multiple sources of information to assess student learning.
- Involving and guiding all students in assessing their own learning.
- Using the results of assessments to guide instruction.
- Communicating with students, families, and other audiences about student progress

Developing as a Professional Educator

- Reflecting on teaching practice and planning professional development.
- Establishing professional goals and pursuing opportunities to grow professionally.
- Working with communities to improve professional practice.
- Working with families to improve professional practice.
- Working with colleagues to improve professional practice.
- Balancing professional responsibilities and maintaining motivation.

Program of Study

Course	Semester and Timing	Faculty
EDMI 511: Teaching and Learning I	Fall First 8 weeks	Erika Daniels
EDMI 521: Literacy I	Fall First 8 weeks	Laurie Stowell
EDMI 543: Mathematics	Fall First 8 weeks	Rong-Ji Chen
EDMI 555: Multicultural and Multilingual Learning	Fall First 8 weeks	Teri Gerent
Clinical Practice I	Fall Thursdays during the first 8 weeks Monday – Friday during the second 8 weeks	Various University Supervisors— Rose Armour Blair Daniels Susan Mitchell Shannon McAndrews Wendy Sottile
EDMI 512: Teaching and Learning II	Spring First 8 weeks	Erika Daniels
EDMI 521: Literacy II	Spring First 8 weeks	Laurie Stowell
EDMI 544: Social Studies	Spring First 8 weeks	TBD
EDMI 545: Science	Spring First 8 weeks	Moses Ochanji
Clinical Practice II	Spring Thursdays during the first 8 weeks Monday – Friday during the second 8 weeks	Various University Supervisors

California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA)

For 20 years, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) has applied performance assessment as one of multiple measures to inform candidate preparedness. This work began in 1998 with the passage of Senate Bill 2042 and later with the passage of Senate Bill 1209, requiring all Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject Credential candidates attending California teacher preparation programs to pass a teaching performance assessment (TPA). In response, the CTC developed a state model TPA, called the [California Teaching Performance Assessment \(CalTPA\)](#), based on the California’s Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs).

The CalTPA has been purposefully structured to address key elements of the TPEs, including:

- development of students' content-specific higher-order thinking and academic language required to be college- and career-ready;
- developmentally appropriate practices in relation to content-specific pedagogy;
- use of educational technology to enhance instruction;
- approaches to classroom management and student engagement that support social-emotional development; and
- effective instruction of all students in the general education classroom, including English learners, all underserved education groups or groups that need to be served differently, and students with special needs.

The redeveloped CalTPA includes two instructional cycles with a focus on content-specific instructional planning and assessment:

- Instructional Cycle 1: Learning About Students and Planning Instruction
- Instructional Cycle 2: Assessment-Driven Instruction

Candidates demonstrate their mastery of the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) through multiple modes. They include writing narratives, annotating video clips in response to set prompts, and providing work products created during the CalTPA cycles. Throughout the three cycles of the CalAPA, candidates learn to provide leadership to school personnel, examine school site data, research evidence-based instructional practices, lead small groups of educators, and coach individual teachers. Candidates demonstrate equitable leadership by identifying and then addressing specific needs of a selected California school (see Resources for CalAPA Program Guide).

Pearson is the vendor that facilitates the assessment process with Commission on Teacher Credentialing including collecting CalTPA fees, receiving Leadership Cycle submissions, and providing assessment scores to the program and individual candidates (students). Specific processes for the three CalTPA cycles shall be discussed in the specific CalTPA fieldwork courses as stated above.

Grading

All coursework will earn a letter grade except for the two Clinical Practice experiences, which will be graded credit/no credit. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing requires that each teacher candidate maintains a grade-point average of 3.0 with no single grade being lower than C+.

Support Services

The following resources are here to provide support for your social-emotional, academic, and administrative requirements throughout your program:

- [Technology Support](#)
- [Zoom and Video Tutorials](#)

- [Library](#)
- [Library Freely Available Resources](#)
- [Sage Research Methods](#)
- [Disability Support Services](#)
- [Writing Center](#)
- [Cougar Care Network](#)
- [Policies](#)

About Clinical Practice

As a Teacher Candidate you should become as familiar with your assigned school as quickly as possible. Familiarize yourself with important school information, such as attendance procedures, grading policies, important deadlines, department and school-wide meetings, expectations of your Cooperating Teacher(s), administrative assignments, and any other area of the profession which you should be aware of and which will enrich your Clinical Practice.

You should establish open communication with your Cooperating Teacher. He/she will guide you through the semester, but you must share your concerns, frustrations, or any problems which may be affecting your classroom if your Cooperating Teacher is to be of *any* assistance. Remember, no one expects you, as the Teacher Candidate, to perform as an experienced instructor. Ask for what you need!

Finally, Clinical Practice is a time of learning, expanding, and experimenting; it is the time for you to “discover” what methodologies meet your personal style and which do not. Use a variety of methodologies and activities over the course of the semester. Also, you are encouraged to observe as many teachers as you can during the semester and from these experiences begin building your own repertoire of teaching skills and teaching styles.

Enjoy this experience. Teaching can be a very rewarding profession. As a teacher, you impact a student’s life each day.

Teacher Candidate Responsibilities:

1. Be on site* all day every day during weeks 9 – 16 of the semester. Call the cooperating teacher and on-site liaison in case of absence. **Exchange email addresses & phone numbers on your first observation day!** Observe the contract hours and holiday breaks scheduled by your school site.
 - a. *For Fall 2020, follow the lead of cooperating teacher (CT) in terms of virtual, face-to-face, or hybrid instruction.
 - b. If the CT is teaching from their classroom with or without students, candidates should do the same.
2. First week:

- a. Spend half of each day with the cooperating teacher. Observe classes and assist in routine tasks and responsibilities. The other half may be spent observing other teachers and other aspects of the school as arranged by the on-site liaison.
- b. *Confer with your cooperating teacher* to prepare for gradual assumption of full teaching responsibilities for half of the day. Discuss how the curriculum you will teach fits into the “big picture” of the scope and sequence of the entire year’s curriculum.
- c. Learn students’ names; discuss classroom organization and discipline issues with the cooperating teacher.
3. Second through third week:
 - a. Begin teaching half days, following the lesson plans devised by the cooperating teacher.
 - b. Assist the cooperating teacher (co-teach or work with small groups or individuals as directed by the cooperating teacher) in the remaining classes.
 - c. By the end of the week, create a calendar of your five-week curriculum/instruction plan with your cooperating teacher. Give a copy to your on-site liaison and university supervisor.
4. Fourth through sixth weeks:
 - a. Continue teaching half days, now using lesson plans that you have written with the guidance of the cooperating teacher.
 - b. Submit a complete lesson plan to the cooperating teacher at least two days prior to teaching a lesson. Based on feedback from the cooperating teacher and subsequent class progress, note revisions on your plan. Keep your lesson plans (with revisions and reflections as appropriate) for future reference.
5. Seventh through tenth weeks:
 - a. Continue teaching your half-day classes, writing your own lesson plans that are approved by your cooperating teacher. In addition, work with your cooperating teacher to take over teaching responsibilities in the remaining half-day of classes. With assistance, write lesson plans for the remaining classes. Your cooperating teacher may assist you in conducting instruction in those classes.
 - b. Continue teaching full time through the last day of CSUSM’s semester.
 - c. Submit a complete lesson plan to the cooperating teacher at least two days prior to teaching a lesson. Be sure to note any last minute revisions on your plan.
 - d. Confer regularly with the cooperating teacher and on-site liaison.
 - e. Complete the [TPE Assessment form](#) with your CT.
6. Attend end-of-semester evaluation conference with the cooperating teacher, on-site liaison and university supervisor. *Bring your completed TPE Assessment Form and any written work as requested by your support team.*
7. Attend all team, department, and faculty meetings and other professional responsibilities. Engage in professional opportunities (e.g. extra-curricular duties, school events) as they arise.
8. Attend seminars/lunches/workshops (as scheduled) with the on-site liaison (OSL).

9. Be formally observed at least four times by the cooperating teacher and twice each by the on-site liaison and university supervisor; obtain written feedback using the CSUSM observation instrument.

Clinical Practice Resources

Attendance during both Clinical Practice experiences is critical and, as such, teacher candidates are expected to be at their CPI sites (in-person or virtually) all day every day during full-time CPI and CPII. If extreme extenuating circumstances present themselves, the teacher candidate (TC) should communicate immediately with all members of their CP support team (cooperating teacher—CT, on-site liaison—OSL, and university supervisor—US). Extensive absences may result in removal from Clinical Practice and necessitate additional semesters to complete the program.

There are multiple forms and documents that are used during Clinical Practice, and they are all accessible on the [School of Education \(SOE\) website](#).