Teaching is an exciting, challenging profession that requires ongoing growth and development. This document is designed to address some of the expectations we have for you here at Syracuse University in the School of Education in terms of how you construct your professional identity in the field. We have constructed the following professional conduct standards to explicitly outline our expectations of your actions, communications, and dress:

To whom and in what situations do these standards apply?
These Professional Conduct Standards apply to any Syracuse University School of Education student who is working toward professional licensure in Inclusive Elementary or Secondary Education. The expectations and guidelines discussed in this document apply whenever or wherever you do – or could potentially – come into contact with K-12 students and/or their parents/guardians. As you reflect on our expectations, we also encourage you to review the Syracuse University Code of Student Conduct (http://supolicies.syr.edu/studs/std_code_conduct.htm).

Professional Dispositions
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accredits the teacher education programs at Syracuse University. These standards identify necessary content knowledge but also articulate standards of behavior or dispositions.

The Professional Conduct Standards that follow support these five broader NCATE Professional Dispositions. During your time here as a preservice teacher – and during your time as an active, licensed teacher in the field – we expect you to commit to:

- Valuing diversity in race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, religion, family, dis/ability and so on, and addressing fairly and equitably social injustices.

- Enacting the belief that all children can learn and the commitment to ensuring their success.

- Engaging in personal and professional behaviors that promote self-growth, including intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm, reflection, and responsible behavior.

- Developing interpersonal behaviors that promote and foster collaborations with students, peers, university and school staff, parents, and community members.

- Demonstrating conduct and ethical behavior suitable to the profession, including the university, schools, and the community.
ACT LIKE A PROFESSIONAL

We recognize that developing a professional identity takes time. Your professional voice, tone, and methods of interacting with students, parents, and colleagues require practice and reflection. We do not expect you to inherently understand what it means to use a professional voice or professionally interact with others. We consider it our responsibility to guide you toward the construction of your own professional identity.

While we recognize the construction of a professional identity is a process, we do expect that you always conduct yourself in an ethical manner that is respectful of persons, property, and confidentiality. We expect you to follow these standards for professional actions:

- We expect that you arrive in your host school before you are scheduled to arrive and, whenever possible, stay later than you are required to stay. There is always something to do in your host school or classroom. Part of serving as a professional suggests that you do not routinely run for the parking lot as soon as school/class is dismissed. This may mean that you are often one of the last individuals to leave the school building. We encourage you to look upon this as a source of pride;

- If you are going to be absent, we expect you to call your host school, email your host teacher and email your faculty member. If you are expected to teach on a day that you will be absent, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE for submitting lesson plans for the classes from which you will be absent. Please note that effective “sub plans” require much more than simply leaving a stack of worksheets. If you are absent, we expect you to submit sub plans that prepare any adult who takes your place for the instructional, social/emotional, and managerial needs of your classroom/students;

- We expect you to conduct yourself as an engaged novice educator. This includes refraining from rolling your eyes, smirking, or sighing heavily in front of students or professional colleagues (i.e. host teacher or supervising teacher);

- We expect you to maintain confidentiality. As you prepare to serve the public, you will come in contact with a variety of physical, verbal, sexual, and substance abuse situations that involve both young people and adults, as well as other confidential information about students, their families, and their abilities/disabilities. These are very serious situations, requiring that you communicate ONLY with the professionals that need to know. When in doubt, ask your current faculty member;

- We expect that you use professional discretion when engaging in conversation with students you serve in particular around personal issues of religion, politics, etc. While you are an SU student, please keep your personal life private and talk about any concerns, conflicts, or questions with your supervising teacher or
faculty. The general public has a way of making your (and teachers’ in general) personal business public. There are times when sharing personal information regarding your identities (religion, sexual orientation, class background) may seem pedagogically important; we urge you to be thoughtful about how and when you share this information, keeping in mind the age and development of your students and bearing in mind that different school environments will have different norms.

- You should not at any time discuss personal matters of parties, drinking, sex, or drugs with school students.

- We expect that you maintain appropriate professional distance between yourself and the students you serve. Do not under any circumstances make any sexual or provocative statements or engage in any sexual acts with students. These actions are illegal and we will report any such actions;

- We expect you to develop as a professional within safe and productive classroom settings. If any student(s), parents, teachers, or administrators make any inappropriate sexual suggestions, actions, or references that involve you in any way, you should report them to your faculty members and the School of Education’s Assistant Dean for Academic Services immediately;

- We expect you to conduct yourself professionally in any public space. This includes exercising restraint when engaging in legal consumption of alcohol. If you are of legal age and choose to drink, do not under any circumstances allow your drinking to influence your actions in the classroom OR your preparation for those actions. If you drink in public, there is an excellent chance that students and their family members will be in that same public space – even at bars on Friday and Saturday nights. The front yard of the fraternity or sorority houses is still considered a public space! Drinking too much on a Thursday or Sunday evening and forgetting to write your lesson plans for the next school day is equally inappropriate and unprofessional. If excessive “of-age” drinking impedes your ability to act like a professional – or to be perceived as a professional by your students, their parents, or your host teachers – you risk being removed from your school placement. Please note our emphasis on perception – visible ink stamps from bars/clubs send strong messages to students, parents, and teachers, regardless of whether or not you consumed alcohol;

- We expect you to obey all laws with regard to the consumption of alcohol. Per Syracuse University policies that apply to all students – not just School of Education students – if you engage in underage drinking, you risk university probation, suspension, or expulsion. In addition to these university sanctions, you risk being removed from any school placements at the time of your infraction;

- We expect that you refrain from using illegal substances, and that you not abuse controlled (prescription) substances. If you use illegal substances or abuse
prescription drugs of any kind, you have a problem. We will help you through established university support and counseling programs, but we will first remove you from the public schools. If we learn of and confirm your use of any type of illegal substance – including even the “occasional use” of any illegal drug – we will engage in immediate actions to remove you from any and all school placements. NOTE that Syracuse University has explicit policies about drug use, possession, and paraphernalia. The same applies to the abuse or distribution of controlled, prescription substances – any use of controlled substances beyond the actions prescribed by a licensed physician is grounds for full removal from public school service;

• We recognize that some of your K-12 students will participate in after-school activities (i.e., plays, concerts, athletic practices, etc.). We require that you not transport any of your students in your own personal vehicle, as this represents a potentially significant liability. Instead, we suggest you help students arrange alternative means of transportation (i.e., public transportation, school resource officer, a designated parent, etc.). If in doubt, contact the student’s designated parent/guardian or a school administrator before arranging any form of transportation.

COMMUNICATE LIKE A PROFESSIONAL

We recognize that learning is a social, interactive process and we value the individual voices of all persons associated with schools – students, parents, teachers, school leaders, and community members. We expect professional educators to develop communication patterns with students, parents, and communities that support classroom learning. In support of students, families, and schools, we expect you to follow these standards for professional communications:

• We expect you to develop appropriate professional mannerisms for engaging with the public. We hope you engage with diverse groups of parents and students, and thus encourage you to prepare to greet and welcome students and parents in culturally respectful ways – handshakes, bows, appropriate verbal greetings, etc.;

• When you are in the public schools in any capacity – teaching, observing, etc. – we expect you not to text or use your cell phone for any reason. Many schools have very clear policies about students not using or even displaying cell phones. Please turn your ringer off before you enter the school building. In addition, we strongly encourage you to develop a voicemail message/greeting for your own phone that is appropriate and professional;

• We expect you to present yourself professionally in all forums – including any and all electronic forums. Consider carefully how you represent yourself on social networking websites. If you have social networking pages, like MySpace and/or Facebook, that have inappropriate pictures or text, we strongly encourage
you to remove that material before you enter the public schools. Although your
students may request to “friend” you through these social networks, we encourage
you to very carefully consider whether or not you will communicate with K-12
students online. Choose carefully the email address(es) that you use to
communicate with student and professional colleagues – some email addresses
may contain inappropriate language or descriptors. In addition, carefully consider
the content of the messages you send via “Twitter.” You want your students and
colleagues to see you as a professional educator, and the informality of social
networking sites tends to detract from this professional identity;

- We expect you to develop a professional voice. Even if you think of yourself as a
“quiet person,” in the classroom you will be an instructional leader and you need
to develop ways of talking that are professional. You will regularly communicate
with parents, teachers, and students. As a teacher-in-training, we will help you
develop these interaction skills. Expect us to encourage you to develop a variety
of professional interaction skills – both verbal and non-verbal. Part of one’s
professional voice includes the words we choose to use. Please be mindful of
swearing (or using inappropriate language or slang) in schools, on school
grounds, or in any remote area where students of yours may be present;

- We expect that anything you write to distribute to students, parents, or colleagues
should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Errors in the
letters/communications you send home to parents or in the documents you
provide your students convey a lack of competence or carelessness;

- We expect that you use appropriate manners when interacting with others. Say
‘thank you’ and ‘please’;

- We expect you to maintain a sense of professionalism if/when faced with
disagreement or conflict. There are a variety of perspectives on most any aspect
of education -- You may not always agree with your host teacher, your supervisor,
a faculty member, a parent of a student you serve, or a particular student.
Unprofessional reactions to other professionals or students (i.e. cussing,
screaming, or acting flippantly and disrespectfully) are inappropriate,
unprofessional, and strongly discouraged;

- We expect you to ensure the general welfare and safety of the students you serve.
As a developing K-12 educator in a public school, your ultimate responsibilities
are the safety and health of your students – REGARDLESS OF WHAT
ACADEMIC SUBJECT (S) YOU MIGHT BE FOCUSING ON! If you have any
questions or concerns about the health or safety of one of your students –
communicate with your faculty members in the School of Education. This
includes our expectation that you follow the same “mandatory reporting”
procedures that licensed teachers must follow. If you have any suspicion that a
K-12 student under your care is experiencing physical, sexual, or verbal abuse
and/or neglect to any degree whatsoever, you are under legal obligation to report
such suspicion. We very strongly suggest that you communicate this suspicion to your host teacher, an appropriate faculty member, and the Assistant Dean for Student Services.

Although it is impossible to address every situation and behavior that we expect you to observe when in the field, we submit these as guidelines to help you understand the kinds of expectations that you will be held to as a teacher-in-training and as a professional educator. Failure to meet these guidelines may result in consequences that include – but are not limited to – removal from a field experience, failing of a course and/or field experience, or dismissal from your School of Education program. In addition to these professional conduct standards, we expect you to be ready to teach, take your lessons seriously, to always go above and beyond to help a student, to be energetic, thoughtful, reflective, and enthusiastic about your teaching and about your students’ learning.

**DRESS LIKE A PROFESSIONAL**
(In all Field Placements)

We value each teacher’s right to dress, present, and express oneself in a manner that reflects creativity, thoughtfulness, and personality. We do not believe there is a standard way a teacher should dress and we fully recognize that different professional classroom settings may require different forms of professional attire for individual teachers.

With these values in mind, we expect that you maintain professional responsibility by selecting comfortable, appropriate clothing that allows you to perform as a professional. We consider the following attire unprofessional and ask that you not wear:

- Tank tops, spaghetti straps, shirts that show your belly/midriff, shirts that reveal cleavage, etc.;
- Underwear (bras, thongs, boxers, etc.) that is visible at any time (standing, sitting, kneeling, etc.);
- Pants/skirts that are too tight or too revealing. If in doubt, err on the conservative side;
- Clothing that is excessively wrinkled, stained, damaged;
- Shirt tails that are untucked (primarily for male teachers);
- Flip flops, casual sandals, or excessively high heels;
• Clothing of any sort that has wording, phrases, advertisements, etc. that might remotely be considered a distraction to the learning environment;

• We ask that you carefully consider eyebrow, nose, and tongue piercings -- schools tend to be conservative environments and judgments/assumptions are often made of individuals who have such piercings, regardless of your ability to teach children;

• We recognize that you will interact with faculty/staff/administrators in schools who may not always display professional attire that meets our expectations. That said, as representatives of our School of Education, we expect professional dress of you at all times

• Creative elementary and secondary teaching involves a number of activities and we strongly encourage you to develop a professional wardrobe that is "workable" -- allowing for dirt, paint, glue, markers, outdoor settings, significant physical movement, etc.

Resources Available to You

If you feel unable to follow any of these standards for personal, political, religious, or disability-related reasons, we encourage you to discuss your concerns as soon as possible with your advisor, field supervisor, or a faculty member. Additionally, we have included the following Syracuse University resources as additional systems of support:

Amie Redmond – Assistant Dean of Academic and Student Services
111 Waverly Place – Suite 230, Syracuse, NY 13244
315-443-2506 OR 315-443-5732
amredmon@syr.edu

George Theoharis – Director of Field Relations
153 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244
315-443-5271
gtheohar@syr.edu

Office of Disability Services (ODS)
804 University Avenue, Room 309, Syracuse, NY 13244
315-443-4498
disabilityservices@syr.edu

Counseling Center
200 Walnut Place, Syracuse, NY 13244
315-443-4715