

MSC 6909
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

August, 2011

Dear Principal,

Thank you for allowing our students to be placed with your teachers for practicum this semester. As you know, this is critical to their preparation as teachers. Field experiences allow them to link the theory and knowledge that they are gaining in their university classes with observation and participation in best practice. It also provides them with the opportunity to demonstrate their performance as a beginning teacher with supportive feedback from mentor teachers and supervisors.

As you know, we have three levels of practicum experiences. These are briefly outlined below. Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.jmu.edu/coe/eere/PracticumInformation.shtml>

ELED 311 - Practicum with a focus on learning and the learner: This first-time experience has students in a PK, K or 1st grade classroom one day a week. Students develop a case study that documents the development of a young child. Students support and assist the cooperating teacher in academic and instructional matters. Mid-semester, students work in the classroom consecutively Monday-Thursday to experience the day to day demands of teaching.

ELED 411 - Practicum with a focus on curriculum integration and guiding behavior: Students assist and support teachers in grades 2 through 5 concentrating on planning and implementing curriculum lessons in social studies, science, math, language arts, and reading. Students focus on instructional and management techniques that foster a climate for learning. Students are placed for one day a week.

ELED 621 - Practicum with a focus on inquiry: Students spend two days each week in a classroom, PK-5. They plan and teach lessons on a regular basis in collaboration with their cooperating teacher. In addition they execute an inquiry project that systematically attempts to answer a question they posed related to themselves as teachers.

JMU is lucky to have the benefit of very experienced supervisors to work with our students in their practicum site. The supervisor working in your school will introduce herself/himself to you. If at any time this semester you or your teachers have any concerns, please share these with the supervisor or with me.

We appreciate your commitment and that of your faculty and staff. The preparation of future teachers is something that can only be done with the cooperation of university and school-based professionals.

Sincerely,

Martha K. Ross, PhD

Head

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