

# Center Of Pedagogy



**MONTCLAIR STATE  
UNIVERSITY NETWORK  
FOR  
EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL**

# District Coordinator Handbook



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  

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**UNIVERSITY**

**Dear MSUNER District Coordinator,**

**Congratulations and welcome!**

**You are the primary link between the Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal, the Montclair State University Center of Pedagogy and colleagues in your school district. Without your diligence, the partnership would not be successful.**

**This booklet outlines:**

- **The activities and responsibilities of the District Coordinator**
- **Specific terms and definitions related to MSUNER activities**
- **Descriptions of some of the MSUNER programs**
- **District membership responsibilities**
- **Responses to frequently asked questions that you may have to answer**

**We are requesting that all MSUNER District Coordinators join our *ning* site at: [www.msuner.org](http://www.msuner.org) to become familiar with the MSUNER mission statement and goals and receive updates on MSUNER professional development and grant opportunities, events, announcements, and activities. Use that site to become more familiar with the importance of school-university partnerships and the simultaneous renewal of the schools and teacher education.**

**Because you are invaluable to the MSUNER, we trust this handbook will provide you with the necessary tools to be successful in your position.**

**Sincerely,**

**DEIRDRE MACKNIGHT  
PROGRAM ASSISTANT, MSUNER**

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## MSUNER VOCABULARY

- **Agenda for Education in a Democracy:** The Office of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy, a unit in the Center of Pedagogy, is responsible for maintaining the focus and vitality of the shared vision that bonds the faculty in education, the arts and sciences, and the public schools as they undertake their common work. The overarching purpose of the endeavor is to strengthen the voice of democracy in the ongoing discussion of the purpose and future of public education in the United States. The 4 principles of the Agenda are: Stewardship of Best Practice; Access to Knowledge for all students; a Nurturing Pedagogy; and Democratic Practice.
- **Clinical Faculty:** Member district school faculty and administrators who apply to the University for appointment as Clinical Faculty. These are teachers/administrators who see themselves as learners as well as educators, who want to share their expertise and nurture pre-service teachers, and who see critical thinking as central to their work with students. Once appointed, these people are offered many professional development activities, including curriculum development opportunities, research options, and campus privileges.
- **Cooperating Teacher:** The classroom teacher who serves as a mentor, model, and peer for the students enrolled in field embedded courses, including field experience and student teaching. Whenever possible, a student is assigned to the same teacher for both fieldwork semesters.
- **CoP:** The Center of Pedagogy is the office that coordinates all aspects of the preparation of teachers at MSU and is the first agency in the country to focus its resources on the direction and coordination of the various aspects of the renewal of teacher education both in the university and in the public schools. Although many may think of the Center as a place located on campus run by university faculty and staff, it is in fact more all-encompassing. The Center is comprised of the three groups that have the most direct impact on teacher education: the College of Education and Human Services, all of the other University colleges, and our partner school districts and communities.
- **MSUNER Executive Committee:** The policy-making body of the Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal (MSUNER) that consists of the superintendent and/or designee(s) from each partner school district, representatives from the University, and the MSUNER Director.
- **Education Mentor:** An on-site education mentor from MSU who observes and assesses a student teacher's teaching from a formative perspective. The improvement of instructional skills is the primary focus of the observation process. The mentor is responsible for a minimum of three observations at sufficiently spaced and coordinated time intervals to allow for the student teacher's growth.
- **Teacher Intern:** A synonym for *student teacher* that should more accurately reflect the role of candidates in the classrooms where they complete their clinical experiences in the schools.
- **MSUNER:** The Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal is an equal partnership between and among MSU and member public school districts that focuses on the simultaneous renewal of schools and teacher preparation. The member school districts understand and agree with the MSU philosophy of teacher education and employ that philosophy when working with MSU students engaged in fieldwork. In addition, the MSUNER offers professional development, curricular development, and research opportunities for the teachers in the member districts.
- **NNER:** Founded in 1986 by education researchers John Goodlad, Roger Soder, and Kenneth Sirotnik, the National Network for Educational Renewal is a "national laboratory" for implementing and testing the ideas that are central to the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. The NNER consists of school-university partnership settings – including Montclair State – that are focused on the simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of educators. At Montclair State University, this partnership is overseen by the Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal (MSUNER).

- **MSUNER Operations Committee:** A committee that implements the policy created by the Executive Committee, plans MSUNER events, and gives input on the everyday activities of the MSUNER. The committee consists of the District Coordinators, University representatives, and the MSUNER Director.
- **Portrait of a Teacher:** A recently revised aspirational document that operationalizes Montclair State University's vision of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of effective educators. This vision statement is used for the admission and evaluation of teacher education students and it forms the philosophical basis for the teacher education program at MSU.
- **Simultaneous Renewal:** The opportunity for teachers/administrators in MSUNER school districts and MSU and MSU students to learn from and inform each other's work with the emphasis on learning as a life-long process.

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### **MSUNER DISTRICT COORDINATOR GUIDELINES**

A District Coordinator, appointed by the partner district, serves as the primary link between the Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal, the Montclair State University Center of Pedagogy and the school district. S/he is responsible for implementing the policies set forth by the Executive Committee of the MSUNER. S/he is driven by the power of the work, not the power of the position.

**Responsibilities:** To carry out responsibilities, s/he

- Must be a Clinical Faculty member.
- Serves on the Operations Committee, which meets bi-monthly.
- Recruits new Clinical Faculty, and facilitates the on-line application process in the district.
- Encourages district educators to become members of the *ning* site ([www.msuner.org](http://www.msuner.org)).
- Maintains open communication between the district and MSU by disseminating MSUNER information, flyers, etc. and keeping in frequent communication with the Director by e-mail or phone.
- Acts as a resource for all Clinical Faculty on issues related to the MSUNER, and responds to their inquiries.
- Updates Clinical Faculty information as needed and informs the MSUNER of those changes as well as changes in the district itself in terms of leadership, policies, or contact information.
- Reviews all Teacher Research Group Grant and Teacher Incentive Grant proposals from the district and sends recommendations for approval to MSUNER Director.
- May assist with placements within the district (relative to district policy). Each committee member should have a list of placements within the district.
- Provides support for district faculty working with MSU students in fieldwork.
- May plan and organize occasional orientation meetings for new Teacher Interns.
- May host meetings, within the district, for Clinical Faculty and others interested in the MSUNER and simultaneous renewal.
- May have the opportunity to serve on subcommittees or task forces, as needed, i.e. Summer Conference, District Coordinator Handbook, CAEP accreditation, etc.
- Facilitates addressing issues that arise pertaining to MSUNER and the partner district.
- Consult MSUNER Canvas site on a regular basis
- Keeps and submits a log of all MSUNER work done as District Coordinator in the district.

**Requirements:** S/he should demonstrate

- An understanding of the basic tenets of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy: Stewardship of Best Practice; Access to Knowledge for all students; a Nurturing Pedagogy that supports student learning needs for high achievement; Democratic Practice as it applies in the classroom and in schools.
- Ability to articulate the mission of the MSUNER for simultaneous renewal of the schools and teacher education, and present this information when necessary.
- Evidence of successful leadership experience including: modeling intellectual curiosity, respecting differing opinions, taking an inquiry stance toward issues, displaying optimism, persistence and patience.
- Strong communication and people skills.
- Experience in collaborative work and an appreciation for its value.
- Knowledge of negotiating skills.
- Evidence of organizational ability.

**Skills:** S/he is able to

- Articulate and model the vision of the MSUNER in the district
- Serve as a catalyst and change agent in the district
- Manage conflict
- Listen well
- Ask hard questions
- Synthesize varying points of view
- Bring new ideas and thinking to the partnership
- Get things done

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### CLINICAL FACULTY INFORMATION

- All teachers and administrators in MSUNER member districts are encouraged to apply for Clinical Faculty status and to join the *ning* site at [www.msuner.org](http://www.msuner.org).
- To acquire Clinical Faculty appointment, candidates must:
  - Complete a brief on-line application
  - Provide a written statement linking their work in schools and teaching for critical thinking with working as a teacher educator in the MSUNER partnership
  - Obtain a letter of recommendation from the principal or district administrator
- Once appointed, the Clinical Faculty member must complete three required mini-courses within two years of formal appointment:
  - Teaching for Critical Thinking  
(Waived if you received teacher certification from MSU because it was included as part of the certification requirements)
  - Strategies for Mentoring/Coaching
  - Culturally Responsive Teaching.
- In order to maintain Clinical Faculty status, Clinical Faculty must meet both of the following criteria:
  - At least once every three years be *willing* either to accept a student teacher or serve as an Education Mentor. This means that someone cannot refuse a placement three years in a row. If a Clinical Faculty member is not asked to serve in these capacities during a three-year period, it will be assumed that s/he was willing to do so.
  - Must *participate* in at least one of the professional development activities related to the MSUNER every two years.

- Clinical Faculty may serve as cooperating teachers, on-site education mentors, co-facilitators of workshops, co-teachers of the student teaching seminar, adjunct faculty for University courses, grant team leaders, etc. Clinical Faculty may obtain campus privileges, including parking, by applying each year for a Campus-Wide ID (CWID).



## MSUNER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**MSUNER is a registered provider of professional development and participants will receive credit for taking part in our programs.**

- **Professional Development Series Courses:** An after school professional development series of mini-courses is offered in both the fall and spring semesters. Clinical Faculty are invited to bring guests. Clinical Faculty are required to take the following courses within two years of their appointment: *Teaching for Critical Thinking, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Strategies for Mentoring and Coaching*. The MSUNER has introduced *Teaching for Critical Thinking and Strategies for Mentoring and Coaching* online to be offered periodically in addition to the face to face courses.
- **Teacher Research Group Grants:** Each member district is entitled to \$1,000 of funding each year for Teacher Research Groups (TRGs). TRGs must include at least four members who meet for a minimum of sixteen hours during the year to study a topic of the members' choosing. The Research Group Coordinator must be a Clinical Faculty Member. Funding of up to \$500 per TRG is available. Requests for proposals are released on line in June and are subject to the review and approval of the District Coordinator and Executive Committee member, and the MSUNER Director.
- **Teacher Incentive Grant:** This grant program provides an opportunity for an active Clinical Faculty Member to develop projects to enhance student learning. Funds will be awarded for resources and selection will be based on how strongly the project affects student learning and achievement.
- **Action Research Project Grant:** This grant opportunity offers a team approach to professional development. A team of up to five Clinical Faculty (teachers and one administrator or supervisor) work together for a year on a research project relating to the four dimensions of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. Participants are required to attend a mini-course on Teacher Action Research and Peer Coaching. Retreats will be required during the school year and a detailed report is required at the end of the year. The team receives a budget to conduct its work and each member is awarded a stipend to conduct and write up the action research project. An on-line application is required for this competitive grant. Requests for proposals are released in the spring.
- **MSUNER Annual Summer Conference:** This professional development event is held annually in late June and is limited to Clinical Faculty, University faculty and guests.
- **MSU Faculty Consultation:** Each member district is entitled to ten gratis hours of MSU faculty/staff consultation time each year. There is an online request form that must be completed by the district. Please contact the MSUNER office for further information.
- **Agenda for Education in a Democracy:** Professional development events are sponsored by the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. Representatives from MSUNER schools and the University convene to exchange ideas on a selected educational issue or theme.
- **Leadership Associates Program:** This is an annual program organized by the Agenda for Education in a Democracy in which selected participants from district schools and MSU gather to discuss issues of simultaneous renewal and the moral dimensions of teaching. Cohort participants meet for one week over the summer and periodically throughout the year. Participation is by application only.

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## **PARTNER DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a partner district in the MSUNER, each school district has responsibilities that pertain to the general operation of the MSUNER. As a District Coordinator, you need to be aware of these responsibilities and to assist your district's administrative staff and educators understand and follow them.

### **Member Districts agree to:**

1. Formal ratification of MSUNER membership by the Board of Education and Superintendent.
2. Commit initially to participate in the MSUNER for a minimum period of two years.
3. Contribute annual dues as specified by the MSUNER Executive Committee.
4. Select a formal representative and alternate to the MSUNER Executive Committee.
5. Ensure the attendance of the Executive Committee representative/alternate at the bi-monthly meetings.
6. Select a District Coordinator and alternate to the Operations Committee.
7. Ensure the attendance of the District Coordinator/alternate at the monthly Operations Meetings.
8. Join with MSU in continuing to commit to the Agenda and the mission of the MSUNER.
9. Work with MSU to establish a special process to give priority to students from MSU for fieldwork.
10. Recruit, support, and recognize the participation and leadership activities of Clinical Faculty in MSUNER activities.
11. Participate in research, evaluation and dissemination activities of the MSUNER.

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### **Montclair State University agrees to:**

1. Formal ratification of MSUNER membership by the Executive Director of the Center of Pedagogy and the Director of the Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal, following approval by MSUNER Executive committee.
2. Provide administrative structure: director, office space, clerical support, mail, telephone, and electronic communication for the MSUNER.
3. Finance and manage the budget of the MSUNER and its initiatives.
4. Provide representation on the Executive and Operations Committees.
5. Provide well prepared teacher education candidates for fieldwork in the schools.
6. Work with district representatives to establish a process to give priority to students from MSU for fieldwork.

7. Grant appointment as Clinical Faculty to qualified personnel from member districts upon successful completion of the application process.
8. Provide space and funding for MSUNER professional development programs and events.
9. Compile a database of faculty members available to consult in MSUNER schools (10 hours per district; additional hours at university rates.)
10. Enable MSU faculty members to work with MSUNER schools.
11. Encourage MSU faculty to work with MSUNER schools.
12. Facilitate grant writing and provide information about external funding sources for the MSUNER.

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### QUESTIONS PEOPLE MAY ASK A DISTRICT COORDINATOR

1. **Can the Professional Development Series courses count toward: A degree at MSU? My district's salary guide? The 100-hour professional development requirement? *Highly Qualified Teacher* requirements?**

A: PD course hours cannot count toward a degree at MSU because they do not carry university credits. If you received teacher certification from MSU you do not need to take the required Critical Thinking course because you have already taken it as part of your certification requirements. Your district needs to determine if it will grant in-service credit for MSUNER mini-courses. Participants receive professional development hours from the MSUNER when they complete each mini-course. The course you take dictates if it is applicable for the HQT requirements.

2. **How do I become an education mentor?**

A: When you become a Clinical Faculty member and take the mentoring course you are then eligible to be an education mentor. The CoP and/or the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Literacy Education choose all mentors. Anyone who works for MSU must submit a cover letter, resume, and necessary salary forms. There is an interview and an orientation session. Let your District Coordinator know if you are interested or contact Caroline Murray at 973-655-7802.

3. **How do I become a cooperating teacher? How do I have a student teacher assigned to me?**

A: The first step is to apply to become Clinical Faculty and take the three required mini-courses; *Teaching for Critical Thinking, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Strategies for Mentoring and Coaching*. Then let your District Coordinator know that you would like to be a cooperating teacher and/or call the Assistant Director of the CoP, Caroline Murray at 973-655-7802 and let her know that you would like to work with a student teacher. You will need to have taken the mentoring course. Even if you do not request a student teacher, you may be asked by the CoP to accept one. You have a choice to accept or decline the opportunity. Finally, you need to check if your district has a specific protocol that needs to be followed.

4. **What types of professional development opportunities are available through MSU?**

A: There are a variety of professional development activities available:

- Professional development workshops are offered in the fall, spring, and occasionally in the summer where teachers take courses on various educational topics.
- Collaborative professional development is available through grants where teachers choose their own area of study and pursue topics of interest as a group.
- Three types of grants are available:
  - Teacher Research Group Grants
  - Teacher Incentive Grants

- Action Research Grants  
(See the descriptions of each in this booklet).
- In addition, the district is entitled to ten free hours of MSU faculty consultation time per year. This can be tailored to district needs. It requires a formal online request, in writing, by the Executive Committee representative or designee for the district.

**5. What is the compensation for a cooperating teacher? An education mentor?**

A: A full time cooperating teacher receives \$400 per semester. Part time is calculated according to the number of hours worked with the junior faculty member.  
An education mentor receives a stipend based on the adjunct rate.  
These stipends are subject to change.

**6. What privileges do Clinical Faculty gain at MSU?**

A: Once approved as Clinical Faculty members may apply for a campus wide ID (CWID). This allows them to obtain privileges such as: parking (surface lot parking after 3:30pm), use of the ADP Center, MSU library privileges, MSU ID and MSU email. Clinical faculty members are preferred to serve as cooperating teachers for student teacher placements and clinical experiences.

## **QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE AS A DISTRICT COORDINATOR**

**1. What is my working relationship with the Executive Committee representative in my district?**

A: This varies from district to district, but, ideally, all district representatives should have a close working relationship. They should work together and support each other so that the district gets the most out of the Network partnership. It is imperative that information about the Network, the different professional development opportunities and other activities of interest be disseminated to the **entire** district and not only to Clinical Faculty. Therefore, it is critical that the District Coordinator receives support from and works with the Executive Committee representative.

**2. How is information disseminated through the MSUNER? What are my responsibilities in this area?**

A: Information comes from the MSUNER office. The MSUNER *ning* site ([www.msuner.org](http://www.msuner.org)) provides all school partners with updated information on MSUNER events and professional development opportunities. Email blasts are sent out to inform *ning* site members of updates. Most correspondence is handled by e-mail and the MSUNER sends documents for distribution in this format. All committee minutes are electronically distributed. Packets of information are distributed at Executive Committee and Operations Committee meetings. It is the responsibility of the District Coordinator to disseminate all information appropriately in the district. The Director can be reached by phone if problems arise and the MSUNER office is open in accordance with the MSU Administrative Calendar. The District Coordinator is the main link between the University and the District and takes responsibility for distribution of important information and materials from e-mail or bulk mailings.

**3. Do you have any tips for recruiting Clinical Faculty?**

A: Request time in meetings at the building, department, or grade level to thoroughly explain what it means to be a Clinical Faculty member with a handout, or show the informational PowerPoint on the MSUNER *ning* site. Encourage colleagues and administrators to join [www.msuner.org](http://www.msuner.org). Collect quotes from active Clinical Faculty members in your district and share these with perspective candidates. Hold an informational meeting to generally discuss the benefits for the individuals involved and the district. Invite potential recruits to join you in taking a mini-course or attending the Summer Conference. Keep Clinical Faculty informed so they can be used as resources to help with recruitment. The MSUNER Director is available to speak at faculty or administrative meetings or to discuss the advantages and responsibilities of Clinical Faculty at smaller group meetings.

**4. How much time should I expect to spend on my duties as District Coordinator?**

A: It depends on the size of the district and your commitment to the position. You should enjoy the work that you do that includes: Attending the Operations Meetings, distributing materials, contacting with Clinical Faculty throughout the year, assisting in field placements if your district permits this,

communicating with the MSUNER Director on an ongoing basis by telephone or e-mail, etc., promoting MSUNER professional development, faculty consultation, and grant opportunities of the MSUNER in your district.

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**Contact information for MSUNER Program Assistant:**

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